BULWER'S WORKS.

Lucian Richard
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KENELM CHILLINGLY.

THE WORKS

OF

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

(LORD LYTTON)

KENELM CHILLINGLY:
HIS ADVENTURES AND OPINIONS.

DEVEREUX.

THE DISOWNED.

THE COMING RACE.

VOLUME II.

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KENELM CHILLINGLY.

BOOK FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

Sir Peter Chillingly, of Exmundham, Baronet, F.R.S. and F.A.S., was the representative of an ancient family, and a landed proprietor of some importance. He had married young, not from any ardent inclination for the connubial state, but in compliance with the request of his parents. They took the pains to select his bride; and if they might have chosen better they might have chosen worse, which is more than can be said for many men who choose wives for themselves. Miss Caroline Brotherton was in all respects a suitable connection. She had a pretty fortune, which was of much use in buying a couple of farms, long desiderated by the Chillinglys as necessary for the rounding of their property into a ring-fence. She was highly connected, and brought into the county that experience of fashionable life acquired by a young lady who has attended a course of balls for three seasons, and gone out in matrimonial honors, with credit to herself and her chaperon. She was handsome enough to satisfy a husband's pride, but not so handsome as to keep perpetually on the *qui vive* a husband's jealousy. She was considered highly accomplished; that is, she played upon the pianoforte so that any musician would say she "was very well taught;" but no musician would go out of his way to hear her a second time. She painted in water-colors—well enough to amuse herself. She knew French and Italian with an elegance so lady-like, that, without having read more than selected extracts from authors in those languages, she spoke them both with an accent more correct than we have any reason to attribute to Rousseau or Ariosto. What else a young lady may acquire in order to be styled highly accomplished I do not pretend to know, but I am sure that the young lady in question fulfilled that requirement in the opinion of the best masters. It was not only an eligible match for Sir Peter Chillingly,—it was a brilliant match. It was also a very unexceptionable match for Miss Caroline Brotherton. This excellent couple got on together as most excellent couples do. A short time after marriage, Sir Peter, by the death of his parents—who, having married their heir, had nothing left in life worth the trouble of living for—succeeded to the hereditary estates; he lived for nine months of the year at Exmundham, going to town for the other three months. Lady Chillingly and himself were both very glad to go to town, being bored at Exmundham; and very glad to go back to Exmundham, being bored in town. With one exception it was an exceedingly happy marriage, as marriages go. Lady Chillingly had her way in small things; Sir Peter his way in great. Small things happen every day, great things once in three years. Once in three years Lady Chillingly gave way to Sir Peter; households so managed go on regularly. The exception to their connubial happiness was, after all, but of a negative description. Their affection was such that they sighed for a pledge of it; fourteen years had he and Lady Chillingly remained unvisited by the little stranger.

Now, in default of male issue, Sir Peter's estates passed to a distant cousin as heir-at-law;

and during the last four years this heir-at-law had evinced his belief that, practically speaking, he was already heir-apparent; and (though Sir Peter was a much younger man than himself, and as healthy as any man well can be) had made his expectations of a speedy succession unpleasantly conspicuous. He had refused his consent to a small exchange of lands with a neighboring squire, by which Sir Peter would have obtained some good arable land for an outlying unprofitable wood that produced nothing but fagots and rabbits, with the blunt declaration that he, the heir-at-law, was fond of rabbit-shooting, and that the wood would be convenient to him next season if he came into the property by that time, which he very possibly might. He disputed Sir Peter's right to make his customary fall of timber, and had even threatened him with a bill in Chancery on that subject. In short, this heir-at-law was exactly one of those persons to spite whom a landed proprietor would, if single, marry at the age of eighty in the hope of a family.

Nor was it only on account of his very natural wish to frustrate the expectations of this unamiable relation, that Sir Peter Chillingly lamented the absence of the little stranger. Although belonging to that class of country gentlemen to whom certain political reasoners deny the intelligence vouchsafed to other members of the community, Sir Peter was not without a considerable degree of book-learning, and a great taste for speculative philosophy. He sighed for a legitimate inheritor to the stores of his erudition, and, being a very benevolent man, for a more active and useful dispenser of those benefits to the human race which philosophers confer by striking hard against each other; just as, how full soever of sparks a flint may be, they might lurk concealed in the flint till doomsday, if the flint were not hit by the steel. Sir Peter, in short, longed for a son amply endowed with the combative quality, in which he himself was deficient, but which is the first essential to all seekers after renown, and especially to benevolent philosophers.

Under these circumstances one may well conceive the joy that filled the household of Exmundham and extended to all the tenantry on that venerable estate, by whom the present possessor was much beloved, and the prospect of an heir-at-law with a special eye to the preservation of rabbits much detested, when the medical attendant of the Chillinglys declared that "her ladyship was in an interesting way;" and to what height that joy culminated when, in due course of time, a male baby was safely enthroned in his cradle. To that cradle Sir Peter was summoned. He entered the room with a lively bound and a radiant countenance: he quitted it with a musing step and an overclouded brow.

Yet the baby was no monster. It did not come into the world with two heads, as some babies are said to have done; it was formed as babies are in general—was on the whole a thriving baby, a fine baby. Nevertheless, its aspect awed the father as already it had awed the nurse. The creature looked so unutterably solemn. It fixed its eyes upon Sir Peter with a melancholy reproachful stare; its lips were compressed and drawn downward as if discontentedly meditating its future destinies. The nurse declared in a frightened whisper that it had uttered no cry on facing the light. It had taken possession of its cradle in all the dignity of silent sorrow. A more saddened and a more thoughtful countenance a human being could not exhibit if he were leaving the world instead of entering it.

"Hem!" said Sir Peter to himself on regaining the solitude of his library; "a philosopher who contributes a new inhabitant to this vale of tears takes upon himself very anxious responsibilities——"

At that moment the joy-bells rang out from the neighboring church-tower, the sun shone into the windows, the bees hummed among the flowers on the lawn: Sir Peter roused himself and looked forth—"After all," said he, cheerily, "the vale of tears is not without a smile."

CHAPTER II.

A FAMILY council was held at Exmundham Hall to deliberate on the name by which this remarkable infant should be admitted into the Christian community. The junior branches of that ancient house consisted, first, of the obnoxious heir-at-law—a Scotch branch—named Chillingly Gordon. He was the widowed father of one son, now of the age of three, and happily unconscious of the injury inflicted on

his future prospects by the advent of the new-born; which could not be truthfully said of his Caledonian father. Mr. Chillingly Gordon was one of those men who get on in the world without our being able to discover why. His parents died in his infancy, and left him nothing; but the family interest procured him an admission into the Charter House School, at which illustrious academy he obtained no remarkable distinction. Nevertheless, as soon as he left it the State took him under its special care, and appointed him to a clerkship in a public office. From that moment he continued to get on in the world, and was now a commissioner of customs, with a salary of £1500 a-year. As soon as he had been thus enabled to maintain a wife, he selected a wife who assisted to maintain himself. She was an Irish peer's widow, with a jointure of £2000 a-year.

A few months after his marriage, Chillingly Gordon effected insurances on his wife's life, so as to secure himself an annuity of £1000 a-year in case of her decease. As she appeared to be a fine healthy woman, some years younger than her husband, the deduction from his income effected by the annual payments for the insurance seemed an over-sacrifice of present enjoyment to future contingencies. The result bore witness to his reputation for sagacity, as the lady died in the second year of their wedding, a few months after the birth of her only child, and of a heart-disease which had been latent to the doctors, but which, no doubt, Gordon had affectionately discovered before he had insured a life too valuable not to need some compensation for its loss. He was now, then, in the possession of £2500 a-year, and was therefore very well off, in the pecuniary sense of the phrase. He had, moreover, acquired a reputation which gave him a social rank beyond that accorded to him by a discerning State. He was considered a man of solid judgment, and his opinion upon all matters, private and public, carried weight. The opinion itself, critically examined, was not worth much, but the way he announced it was imposing. Mr. Fox said that "No one ever was so wise as Thurlow looked." Lord Thurlow could not have looked wiser than Mr. Chillingly Gordon. He had a square jaw and large red bushy eyebrows, which he lowered down with great effect when he delivered judgment. He had another advantage for acquiring grave reputation. He was a very unpleasant man. He could be rude if you contradicted him; and as few persons wish to provoke rudeness, so he was seldom contradicted.

Mr. Chillingly Mivers, another cadet of the house, was also distinguished, but in a different way. He was a bachelor, now about the age of thirty-five. He was eminent for a supreme well-bred contempt for everybody and everything. He was the originator and chief proprietor of a public journal called 'The Londoner,' which had lately been set up on that principle of contempt, and, we need not say, was exceedingly popular with those leading members of the communtiy who admire nobody and believe in nothing. Mr. Chillingly Mivers was regarded by himself and by others as a man who might have achieved the highest success in any branch of literature, if he had deigned to exhibit his talents therein. But he did not so deign, and therefore he had full right to imply that, if he had written an epic, a drama, a novel, a history, a metaphysical treatise, Milton, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Hume, Berkeley, would have been nowhere. He held greatly to the dignity of the anonymous; and even in the journal which he originated, nobody could ever ascertain what he wrote. But, at all events, Mr. Chillingly Mivers was what Mr. Chillingly Gordon was not—viz., a very clever man, and by no means an unpleasant one in general society.

The Rev. John Stalworth Chillingly was a decided adherent to the creed of what is called "muscular Christianity," and a very fine specimen of it too. A tall stout man with broad shoulders, and that division of lower limb which intervenes between the knee and the ankle powerfully developed. He would have knocked down a deist as soon as looked at him. It is told by the Sieur de Joinville, in his Memoir of Louis, the sainted king, that an assembly of divines and theologians convened the Jews of an oriental city for the purpose of arguing with them on the truths of Christianity, and a certain knight, who was at that time crippled, and supporting himself on crutches, asked and obtained permission to be present at the debate. The Jews flocked to the summons, when a prelate, selecting a learned rabbi, mildly put to him the leading question whether he owned the divine conception of our Lord. "Certainty not," replied the rabbi; whereon the pious knight, shocked

by such blasphempy, uplifted his crutch and felled the rabbi, and then flung himself among the other misbelievers, whom he soon dispersed in ignominious flight and in a very belabored condition. The conduct of the knight was reported to the sainted king, with a request that it should be properly reprimanded; but the sainted king delivered himself of this wise judgment:—

"If a pious knight is a very learned clerk, and can meet in fair argument the doctrines of the misbeliever, by all means let him argue fairly; but if a pious knight is not a learned clerk, and the argument goes against him, then let the pious knight cut the discussion short by the edge of his good sword."

The Rev. John Stalworth Chillingly was of the same opinion as St. Louis; otherwise, he was a mild and amiable man. He encouraged cricket and other manly sports among his rural parishioners. He was a skilful and bold rider, but he did not hunt; a convivial man—and took his bottle freely. But his tastes in literature were of a refined and peaceful character, contrasting therein the tendencies one might have expected from his muscular development of Christianity. He was a great reader of poetry, but he disliked Scott and Bryon, whom he considered flashy and noisy: he maintained that Pope was only a versifier, and that the greatest poet in the language was Wordsworth; he did not care much for the ancient classics; he refused all merit to the French poets; he knew nothing of the Italian, but he dabbled in German, and was inclined to bore one about the Hermann and Dorothea of Goethe. He was married to a homely little wife, who revered him in silence, and thought there would be no schism in the Church if he were in his right place as Archbishop of Canterbury; in this opinion he entirely agreed with his wife.

Besides these three male specimens of the Chillingly race, the fairer sex was represented, in the absence of her ladyship, who still kept her room, by three female Chillinglys—sisters of Sir Peter—and all three spinsters. Perhaps one reason why they had remained single was, that externally they were so like each other that a suitor must have been puzzled which to choose, and may have been afraid that if he did choose one, he should be caught next day kissing another one in mistake. They were all tall, all thin, with long throats—and beneath the throats a fine development of bone. They had all pale hair, pale eyelids, pale eyes, and pale complexions. They all dressed exactly alike, and their favorite color was a vivid green: they were so dressed on this occasion.

As there was such similitude in their persons, so, to an ordinary observer, they were exactly the same in character and mind. Very well behaved, with proper notions of female decorum—very distant and reserved in manner to strangers—very affectionate to each other and their relations or favorites—very good to the poor, whom they looked upon as a different order of creation, and treated with that sort of benevolence which humane people bestow upon dumb animals. Their minds had been nourished on the same books—what one read the others had read. The books were mainly divided into two classes—novels, and what they called "good books." They had a habit of taking a specimen of each alternately—one day a novel, then a good book, then a novel again, and so on. Thus if the imagination was overwarmed on Monday, on Tuesday it was cooled down to a proper temperature; and if frostbitten on Tuesday, it took a tepid bath on Wednesday. The novels they chose were indeed rarely of a nature to raise the intellectual thermometer into blood heat: the heroes and heroines were models of correct conduct. Mr. James's novels were then in vogue, and they united in saying that those "*were* novels a father might allow his daughters to read." But though an ordinary observer might have failed to recognize any distinction between these three ladies, and, finding them habitually dressed in green, would have said they were as much alike as one pea is to another, they had their idiosyncratic differences, when duly examined. Miss Margaret, the eldest, was the commanding one of the three; it was she who regulated their household (they all lived together), kept the joint purse, and decided every doubtful point that arose,—whether they should or should not ask Mrs. So-and-so to tea—whether Mary should or should not be discharged—whether or not they should go to Broadstairs or to Sandgate for the month of October. In fact, Miss Margaret was the WILL of the body corporate.

Miss Sibyl was of milder nature and more melancholy temperament; she had a poetic turn of mind, and occasionally wrote verses.

Some of these had been printed on satin paper, and sold for objects of beneficence at charity bazaars. The county newspapers said that the verses "were characterized by all the elegance of a cultured and feminine mind." The other two sisters agreed that Sibyl was the genius of the household, but, like all geniuses, not sufficiently practical for the world. Miss Sarah Chillingly, the youngest of the three, and now just in her forty-fourth year, was looked upon by the others as "a dear thing, inclined to be naughty, but such a darling that nobody could have the heart to scold her." Miss Margaret said "she was a giddy creature." Miss Sibyl wrote a poem on her, entitled—

"Warning to a young Lady against the Pleasures of the World."

They all called her Sally; the other two sisters had no diminutive synonyms. Sally is a name indicative of fastness. But this Sally would not have been thought fast in another household, and she was now little likely to sally out of the one she belonged to. These sisters, who were all many years older than Sir Peter, lived in a handsome old-fashioned red-brick house, with a large garden at the back, in the principal street of the capital of their native county. They had each £10,000 for portion; and if he could have married all three, the heir-at-law would have married them, and settled the aggregate £30,000 on himself. But we have not yet come to recognize Mormonism as legal, though, if our social progress continues to slide in the same grooves as at present, heaven only knows what triumphs over the prejudices of our ancestors may not be achieved by the wisdom of our descendants!

CHAPTER III.

Sir Peter stood on his hearthstone, surveyed the guests seated in semicircle, and said: "Friends,—in Parliament, before anything affecting the fate of a Bill is discussed, it is, I believe, necessary to introduce the Bill." He paused a moment, rang the bell, and said to the servant who entered, "Tell nurse to bring in the Baby."

Mr. Gordon Chillingly.—"I don't see the necessity for that, Sir Peter. We may take the existence of the Baby for granted."

Mr. Mivers.—"It is an advantage to the reputation of Sir Peter's work to preserve the incognito. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.*"

The Rev. John Stalworth Chillingly.—"I don't approve the cynical levity of such remarks. Of course we must all be anxious to see, in the earliest stage of being, the future representative of our name and race. Who would not wish to contemplate the source, however small, of the Tigris or the Nile!——"

Miss Sally (tittering).—"He! he!"

Miss Margaret.—"For shame, you giddy thing!"

The Baby enters in the nurse's arms. All rise and gather round the Baby, with one exception—Mr. Gordon, who has ceased to be heir-at-law.

The Baby returned the gaze of its relations with the most contemptuous indifference. Miss Sibyl was the first to pronounce an opinion on the Baby's attributes. Said she, in a solemn whisper—"What a heavenly mournful expression! it seems so grieved to have left the angels!"

The Rev. John.—"That is prettily said, cousin Sibyl; but the infant must pluck up its courage and fight its way among mortals with a good heart, if it wants to get back to the angels again. And I think it will; a fine child." He took it from the nurse, and moving it deliberately up and down, as if to weigh it, said cheerfully, "Monstrous heavy! by the time it is twenty it will be a match for a prizefighter of fifteen stone!"

Therewith he strode to Gordon, who, as if to show that he now considered himself wholly apart from all interest in the affairs of a family that had so ill-treated him in the birth of that Baby, had taken up the 'Times' newspaper and concealed his countenance beneath the ample sheet. The Parson abruptly snatched away the 'Times' with one hand, and, with the other substituting to the indignant eyes of the *ci-devant* heir-at-law the spectacle of the Baby, said, "Kiss it."

"Kiss it!" echoed Chillingly Gordon, pushing back his chair—"kiss it! pooh, sir, stand off! I never kissed my own baby; I shall not kiss another man's. Take the thing away, sir; it is ugly; it has black eyes."

Sir Peter, who was near-sighted, put on his

spectacles and examined the face of the new-born. "True," said he, "it has black eyes—very extraordinary—portentous; the first Chillingly that ever had black eyes."

"Its mamma has black eyes," said Miss Margaret; "it takes after its mamma; it has not the fair beauty of the Chillinglys, but it is not ugly."

"Sweet infant!" sighed Sibyl; "and so good—does not cry."

"It has neither cried nor crowed since it was born," said the nurse; "bless its little heart!"

She took the Baby from the Parson's arms, and smoothed back the frill of its cap, which had got ruffled.

"You may go now, nurse," said Sir Peter.

CHAPTER IV.

"I AGREE with Mr. Shandy," said Sir Peter, resuming his stand on the hearthstone, "that among the responsibilities of a parent, the choice of a name which his child is to bear for life is one of the gravest. And this is especially so with those who belong to the order of baronets. In the case of a peer, his Christian name, fused into his titular designation, disappears. In the case of a Mister, if his baptismal be cacophonous or provocative of ridicule, he need not unostentatiously parade it; he may drop it altogether on his visiting cards, and may be imprinted as Mr. Jones instead of Mr. Ebenezer Jones. In his signature, save where the forms of the law demand Ebenezer in full, he may only use an initial, and be your obedient servant E. Jones, leaving it to be conjectured that E. stands for Edward or Ernest—names inoffensive, and not suggestive of a Dissenting Chapel, like Ebenezer. If a man called Edward or Ernest be detected in some youthful indiscretion, there is no indelible stain on his moral character; but if an Ebenezer be so detected, he is set down as a hypocrite—it produces that shock on the public mind which is felt when a professed saint is proved to be a bit of a sinner. But a baronet never can escape from his baptismal—it cannot lie *perdu*, it cannot shrink into an initial, it stands forth glaringly in the light of day; christen him Ebenezer, and he is Sir Ebenezer in full, with all its perilous consequences if he ever succumb to those temptations to which even baronets are exposed. But, my friends, it is not only the effect that the sound of a name has upon others which is to be thoughtfully considered; the effect that his name produces on the man himself is perhaps still more important. Some names stimulate and encourage the owner, others deject and paralyze him; I am a melancholy instance of that truth. Peter has been for many generations, as you are aware, the baptismal to which the eldest-born of our family has been devoted. On the altar of that name I have been sacrificed. Never has there been a Sir Peter Chillingly who has, in a way, distinguished himself above his fellows. That name has been a dead weight on my intellectual energies. In the catalogue of illustrious Englishmen there is, I think, no immortal Sir Peter, except Sir Peter Teazle, and he only exists on the comic stage."

MISS SIBYL.—"Sir Peter Lely?"

SIR PETER CHILLINGLY.—"That painter was not an Englishman. He was born in Westphalia, famous for hams. I confine my remarks to the children of our native land. I am aware that in foreign countries the name is not an extinguisher to the genius of its owner. But why? In other countries its sound is modified. Pierre Corneille was a great man; but I put it to you whether, had he been an Englishman, he could have been the father of European tragedy as Peter Crow?"

MISS SIBYL.—"Impossible!"

MISS SALLY.—"He! he!"

MISS MARGARET.—"There is nothing to laugh at, you giddy child!"

SIR PETER.—"My son shall not be petrified into Peter."

MR. GORDON CHILLINGLY.—"If a man is such a fool—and I don't say your son will not be a fool, cousin Peter—as to be influenced by the sound of his own name, and you want the booby to turn the world topsy-turvy, you had better call him Julius Cæsar, or Hannibal, or Attila, or Charlemagne."

SIR PETER (who excels mankind in imperturbability of temper).—"On the contrary, if you inflict upon a man the burden of one of those names, the glory of which he cannot reasonably expect to eclipse or even to equal, you crush him beneath the weight. If a poet were called John Milton or William Shakespeare, he

could not dare to publish even a sonnet. No; the choice of a name lies between the two extremes of ludicrous insignificance and oppressive renown. For this reason I have ordered the family pedigree to be suspended on yonder wall. Let us examine it with care, and see whether, among the Chillinglys themselves or their alliances, we can discover a name that can be borne with becoming dignity by the destined head of our house—a name neither too light nor too heavy."

Sir Peter here led the way to the family tree —a goodly roll of parchment, with the arms of the family emblazoned at the top. Those arms were simple, as ancient heraldic coats are —three fishes *argent* on a field *azur;* the crest a mermaid's head. All flocked to inspect the pedigree except Mr. Gordon, who resumed the 'Times' newspaper.

"I never could quite make out what kind of fishes these are," said the Rev. John Stalworth. "They are certainly not pike, which formed the emblematic blazon of the Hotofts, and are still grim enough to frighten future Shakespeares, on the scutcheon of the Warwickshire Lucys."

"I believe they are tenches," said Mr. Mivers. "The tench is a fish that knows how to keep itself safe, by a philosophical taste for an obscure existence in deep holes and slush."

Sir Peter.—"No, Mivers; the fishes are dace, a fish that, once introduced into any pond, never can be got out again. You may drag the water—you may let off the water—you may say 'Those dace are extirpated,'—vain thought! —the dace reappear as before; and in this respect the arms are really emblematic of the family. All the disorders and revolutions that have occurred in England since the Heptarchy have left the Chillinglys the same race in the same place. Somehow or other the Norman Conquest did not despoil them; they held fiefs under Eudo Dapifer as peacefully as they had held them under King Harold; they took no part in the Crusades, nor the Wars of the Roses, nor the Civil Wars between Charles the First and the Parliament. As the dace sticks to the water, and the water sticks by the dace, so the Chillinglys stuck to the land and the land stuck by the Chillinglys. Perhaps I am wrong to wish that the new Chillingly may be a little less like a dace."

"Oh!" cried Miss Margaret, who, mounted on a chair, had been inspecting the pedigree through an eye-glass, "I don't see a fine Christian name from the beginning, except Oliver."

Sir Peter.—"That Chillingly was born in Oliver Cromwell's Protectorate, and named Oliver in compliment to him, as his father, born in the reign of James I., was christened James. The three fishes always swam with the stream. Oliver!—Oliver not a bad name, but significant of radical doctrines."

Mr. Mivers.—"I don't think so. Oliver Cromwell made short work of radicals and their doctrines; but perhaps we can find a name less awful and revolutionary."

"I have it—I have it," cried the Parson. "Here is a descent from Sir Kenelm Digby and Venetia Stanley. Sir Kenelm Digby! No finer specimen of muscular Christianity. He fought as well as he wrote;—eccentric, it is true, but always a gentleman. Call the boy Kenelm!"

"A sweet name," said Miss Sibyl—"it breathes of romance."

"Sir Kenelm Chillingly! It sounds well—imposing!" said Miss Margaret.

"And," remarked Mr. Mivers, "it has this advantage—that while it has sufficient association with honorable distinction to affect the mind of the namesake and rouse his emulation, it is not that of so stupendous a personage as to defy rivalry. Sir Kenelm Digby was certainly an accomplished and gallant gentleman; but what with his silly superstition about sympathetic powders, etc., any man nowadays might be clever in comparison without being a prodigy. Yes, let us decide on Kenelm."

Sir Peter meditated. "Certainly," said he, after a pause—"certainly the name of Kenelm carries with it very crotchety associations; and I am afraid that Sir Kenelm Digby did not make a prudent choice in marriage. The fair Venetia was no better than she should be: and I should wish my heir not to be led away by beauty, but wed a woman of respectable character and decorous conduct"

Miss Margaret.—"A British matron, of course!"

Three Sisters (in chorus).—"Of course—of course!"

"But," resumed Sir Peter, "I am crotchety myself, and crotchets are innocent things enough; and as for marriage, the Baby cannot marry to-morrow, so that we have ample time

to consider that matter. Kenelm Digby was a man any family might be proud of; and, as you say, sister Margaret, Kenelm Chillingly does not sound amiss—Kenelm Chillingly it shall be!"

The Baby was accordingly christened Kenelm, after which ceremony its face grew longer than before.

CHAPTER V.

Before his relations dispersed, Sir Peter summoned Mr. Gordon into his library.

"Cousin," said he, kindly, "I do not blame you for the want of family affection, or even of humane interest, which you exhibit towards the New-born."

"Blame me, cousin Peter! I should think not. I exhibit as much family affection and humane interest, as could be expected from me—circumstances considered."

"I own," said Sir Peter, with all his wonted mildness, "that after remaining childless for fourteen years of wedded life, the advent of this little stranger must have occasioned you a disagreeable surprise. But, after all, as I am many years younger than you, and, in the course of nature, shall outlive you, the loss is less to yourself than to your son, and upon that I wish to say a few words. You know too well the conditions on which I hold my estate not to be aware that I have not legally the power to saddle it with any bequest to your boy. The New-born succeeds to the fee-simple as last in tail. But I intend, from this moment, to lay by something every year for your son out of my income; and, fond as I am of London for a part of the year, I shall now give up my town-house. If I live to the years the Psalmist allots to man, I shall thus accumulate something handsome for your son, which may be taken in the way of compensation."

Mr. Gordon was by no means softened by this generous speech. However, he answered more politely than was his wont, "My son will be very much obliged to you, should he ever need your intented bequest." Pausing a moment, he added, with a cheerful smile, "A large percentage of infants die before attaining the age of twenty-one."

"Nay, but I am told your son is an uncommonly fine healthy child."

"My son, cousin Peter! I was not thinking of my son, but of yours. Yours has a big head. I should not wonder if he had water in it. I don't wish to alarm you, but he may go off any day, and in that case it is not likely that Lady Chillingly will condescend to replace him. So you will excuse me if I still keep a watchful eye on my rights; and however painful to my feelings, I must still dispute your right to cut a stick of the field timber."

"That is nonsense, Gordon. I am tenant for life without impeachment of waste, and can cut down all timber not ornamental."

"I advise you not, cousin Peter. I have told you before that I shall try the question at law, should you provoke it—amicably, of course. Rights are rights; and if I am driven to maintain mine, I trust that you are of a mind too liberal to allow your family affection to me and mine to be influenced by a decree of the Court of Chancery. But my fly is waiting. I must not miss the train."

"Well, good-bye, Gordon. Shake hands."

"Shake hands!—of course—of course. By the by, as I came through the lodge, it seemed to me sadly out of repair. I believe you are liable for dilapidations. Good-bye."

"The man is a hog in armor," soliloquized Sir Peter, when his cousin was gone; "and if it be hard to drive a common pig in the way he don't choose to go, a hog in armor is indeed undrivable. But his boy ought not to suffer for his father's hoggishness; and I shall begin at once to see what I can lay by for him. After all, it *is* hard upon Gordon. Poor Gordon!—poor fellow—poor fellow! Still I hope he will not go to law with me. I hate law. And a worm will turn—especially a worm that is put into Chancery."

CHAPTER VI.

Despite the sinister semi-predictions of the *ci-devant* heir-at-law, the youthful Chillingly passed with safety, and indeed with dignity through the infant stages of existence. He took his measles and whooping-cough with philosophical equanimity. He gradually acquired the use of speech, but he did not too lavishly exercise that special attribute of humanity. During the earlier years of childhood

he spoke as little as if he had been prematurely trained in the school of Pythagoras. But he evidently spoke the less in order to reflect the more. He observed closely and pondered deeply over what he observed. At the age of eight he began to converse more freely, and it was in that year that he startled his mother with the question—"Mamma, are you not sometimes overpowered by the sense of your own identity?"

Lady Chillingly—I was about to say rushed, but Lady Chillingly never rushed—Lady Chillingly glided less sedately than her wont to Sir Peter, and, repeating her son's question, said, "The boy is growing troublesome, too wise for any woman; he must go to school."

Sir Peter was of the same opinion. But where on earth did the child get hold of so long a word as "identity," and how did so extraordinary and puzzling a metaphysical question come into his head? Sir Peter summoned Kenelm, and ascertained that the boy, having free access to the library, had fastened upon Locke on the Human Understanding, and was prepared to dispute with that philosopher upon the doctrine of innate ideas. Quoth Kenelm, gravely—"A want is an idea; and if, as soon as I was born, I felt the want of food and knew at once where to turn for it, without being taught, surely I came into the world with an 'innate idea.'"

Sir Peter, though he dabbled in metaphysics, was posed, and scratched his head without getting out a proper answer as to the distinction between ideas and instincts. "My child," he said at last, "you don't know what you are talking about; go and take a good gallop on your black pony; and I forbid you to read any books that are not given to you by myself or your mamma. Stick to Puss in Boots."

CHAPTER VII.

Sir Peter ordered his carriage and drove to the house of the stout Parson. That doughty ecclesiastic held a family living a few miles distant from the Hall, and was the only one of the cousins with whom Sir Peter habitually communed on his domestic affairs.

He found the Parson in his study, which exhibited tastes other than clerical. Over the chimney-piece were ranged fencing-foils, boxing-gloves, and staffs for the athletic exercise of single-stick; cricket-bats and fishing-rods filled up the angles. There were sundry prints on the walls: one of Mr. Wordsworth, flanked by two of distinguished race-horses; one of a Leicestershire short-horn, with which the Parson, who farmed his own glebe and bred cattle in its rich pastures, had won a prize at the county show; and on either side of that animal were the portraits of Hooker and Jeremy Taylor. There were dwarf bookcases containing miscellaneous works very handsomely bound. At the open window, a stand of flower-pots, the flowers in full bloom. The Parson's flowers were famous.

The appearance of the whole room was that of a man who is tidy and neat in his habits.

"Cousin," said Sir Peter, "I have come to consult you." And therewith he related the marvellous precocity of Kenelm Chillingly. "You see the name begins to work on him rather too much. He must go to school; and now what school shall it be? Private or public?"

The Rev. John Stalworth.—"There is a great deal to be said for or against either. At a public school the chances are that Kenelm will no longer be overpowered by a sense of his own identity; he will more probably lose identity altogether. The worst of a public school is that a sort of common character is substituted for individual character. The master, of course, can't attend to the separate development of each boy's idiosyncrasy. All minds are thrown into one great mould, and come out of it more or less in the same form. An Etonian may be clever or stupid, but, as either, he remains emphatically Etonian. A public school ripens talent, but its tendency is to stifle genius. Then, too, a public school for an only son, heir to a good estate, which will be entirely at his own disposal, is apt to encourage reckless and extravagant habits; and your estate requires careful management, and leaves no margin for an heir's notes-of-hand and post-obits. On the whole, I am against a public school for Kenelm."

"Well, then we will decide on a private one."

"Hold!" said the Parson: "a private school has its drawbacks. You can seldom produce large fishes in small ponds. In pri-

vate schools the competition is narrowed, the energies stinted. The schoolmaster's wife interferes, and generally coddles the boys. There is not manliness enough in those academies; no fagging, and very little fighting. A clever boy turns out a prig; a boy of feebler intellect turns out a well-behaved young lady in trousers. Nothing muscular in the system. Decidedly the namesake and descendant of Kenelm Digby should not go to a private seminary."

"So far as I gather from your reasoning," said Sir Peter, with characteristic placidity, "Kenelm Chillingly is not to go to school at all."

"It does look like it," said the Parson, candidly; "but, on consideration, there is a medium. There are schools which unite the best qualities of public and private schools, large enough to stimulate and develop energies mental and physical, yet not so framed as to melt all character in one crucible. For instance, there is a school which has at this moment one of the first scholars in Europe for head-master—a school which has turned out some of the most remarkable men of the rising generation. The master sees at a glance if a boy be clever, and takes pains with him accordingly. He is not a mere teacher of hexameters and sapphics. His learning embraces all literature, ancient and modern. He is a good writer and a fine critic—admires Wordsworth. He winks at fighting, his boys know how to use their fists, and they are not in the habit of signing post-obits before they are fifteen. Merton School is the place for Kenelm."

"Thank you," said Sir Peter. "It is a great comfort in life to find somebody who can decide for one. I am an irresolute man myself, and in ordinary matters willingly let Lady Chillingly govern me."

"I should like to see a wife govern *me*," said the stout Parson.

"But you are not married to Lady Chillingly. And now let us go into the garden and look at your dahlias."

CHAPTER VIII.

The youthful confuter of Locke was despatched to Merton School, and ranked, according to his merits, as lag of the penultimate form. When he came home for the Christmas holidays he was more saturnine than ever—in fact, his countenance bore the impression of some absorbing grief. He said, however, that he liked school very well, and eluded all other questions. But early the next morning he mounted his black pony and rode to the Parson's rectory. The reverend gentleman was in his farm-yard examining his bullocks when Kenelm accosted him thus briefly:—

"Sir, I am disgraced, and I shall die of it if you cannot help to set me right in my own eyes."

"My dear boy, don't talk in that way. Come into my study."

As soon as they entered that room, and the Parson had carefully closed the door, he took the boy's arm, turned him round to the light, and saw at once that there was something very grave on his mind. Chucking him under the chin, the Parson said cheerily, "Hold up your head, Kenelm. I am sure you have done nothing unworthy of a gentleman."

"I don't know that. I fought a boy very little bigger than myself, and I have been licked. I did not give in, though; but the other boys picked me up, for I could not stand any longer—and the fellow is a great bully—and his name is Butt—and he's the son of a lawyer—and he got my head into chancery—and I have challenged him to fight again next half—and unless you can help me to lick him, I shall never be good for anything in the world—never. It will break my heart."

"I am very glad to hear you have had the pluck to challenge him. Just let me see how you double your fist. Well, that's not amiss. Now, put yourself into a fighting attitude, and hit out at me—hard—harder! Pooh! that will never do. You should make your blows as straight as an arrow. And that's not the way to stand. Stop—so; well on your haunches—weight on the left leg—good! Now, put on these gloves, and I'll give you a lesson in boxing."

Five minutes afterwards Mrs. John Chillingly entering the room to summon her husband to breakfast, stood astounded to see him with his coat off, and parrying the blows of Kenelm, who flew at him like a young tiger. The good pastor at that moment might certainly have appeared a fine type of muscular Christianity, but

not of that kind of Christianity out of which one makes Archbishops of Canterbury.

"Good gracious me!" faltered Mrs. John Chillingly; and then, wife-like, flying to the protection of her husband, she seized Kenelm by the shoulders, and gave him a good shaking. The Parson, who was sadly out of breath, was not displeased at the interruption, but took that opportunity to put on his coat, and said, "We'll begin again to-morrow. Now, come to breakfast." But during breakfast Kenelm's face still betrayed dejection, and he talked little, and ate less.

As soon as the meal was over, he drew the Parson into the garden and said, "I have been thinking, sir, that perhaps it is not fair to Butt, that I should be taking these lessons; and if it is not fair, I'd rather not——"

"Give me your hand, my boy!" cried the Parson, transported. "The name of Kenelm is not thrown away upon you. The natural desire of man in his attribute of fighting animal (an attribute in which, I believe, he excels all other animated beings, except a quail and a gamecock), is to beat his adversary. But the natural desire of that culmination of man which we call gentleman, is to beat his adversary fairly. A gentleman would rather be beaten fairly than beat unfairly. Is not that your thought?"

"Yes," replied Kenelm, firmly; and then, beginning to philosophize, he added,—"And it stands to reason; because if I beat a fellow unfairly, I don't really beat him at all."

"Excellent! But suppose that you and another boy go into examination upon Cæsar's Commentaries or the multiplication-table, and the other boy is cleverer than you, but you have taken the trouble to learn the subject and he has not; should you say you beat him unfairly?"

Kenelm meditated a moment, and then said decidedly, "No."

"That which applies to the use of your brains applies equally to the use of your fists. Do you comprehend me?"

"Yes, sir; I do now."

"In the time of your namesake, Sir Kenelm Digby, gentlemen wore swords, and they learned how to use them, because, in case of quarrel, they had to fight with them. Nobody, at least in England, fights with swords now. It is a democratic age, and if you fight at all you are reduced to fists; and if Kenelm Digby learned to fence, so Kenelm Chillingly must learn to box; and if a gentleman thrashes a drayman twice his size, who has not learned to box, it is not unfair; it is but an exemplification of the truth, that knowledge is power. Come and take another lesson on boxing to-morrow."

Kenelm remounted his pony and returned home. He found his father sauntering in the garden with a book in his hand. "Papa," said Kenelm, "how does one gentleman write to another with whom he has a quarrel, and he don't want to make it up, but he has something to say about the quarrel which it is fair the other gentleman should know?"

"I don't understand what you mean."

"Well, just before I went to school I remember hearing you say that you had a quarrel with Lord Hautfort, and that he was an ass, and you would write and tell him so. When you wrote did you say, 'You are an ass'? Is that the way one gentleman writes to another?"

"Upon my honor, Kenelm, you ask very odd questions. But you cannot learn too early this fact, that irony is to the high-bred what Billingsgate is to the vulgar; and when one gentleman thinks another gentleman an ass, he does not say it point-blank—he implies it in the politest terms he can invent. Lord Hautfort denies my right of free warren over a trout-stream that runs through his lands. I don't care a rush about the trout-stream, but there is no doubt of my right to fish in it. He was an ass to raise the question; for, if he had not, I should not have exercised the right. As he did raise the question, I was obliged to catch his trout."

"And you wrote a letter to him?"

"Yes."

"How did you write, papa? What did you say?"

"Something like this. 'Sir Peter Chillingly presents his compliments to Lord Hautfort, and thinks it fair to his lordship to say that he has taken the best legal advice with regard to his rights of free warren, and trusts to be forgiven if he presumes to suggest that Lord Hautfort might do well to consult his own lawyer before he decides on disputing them.'"

"Thank you, papa. I see——"

That evening Kenelm wrote the following letter:—

"Mr. Chillingly presents his compliments to Mr.

Butt, and thinks it fair to Mr. Butt to say, that he is taking lessons in boxing, and trusts to be forgiven if he presumes to suggest that Mr. Butt might do well to take lessons himself before fighting with Mr. Chillingly next half."

"Papa," said Kenelm the next morning, "I want to write to a schoolfellow whose name is Butt; he is the son of a lawyer who is called a serjeant. I don't know where to direct to him."

"That is easily ascertained," said Sir Peter. "Serjeant Butt is an eminent man, and his address will be in the Court Guide." The address was found—Bloomsbury Square, and Kenelm directed his letter accordingly. In due course he received this answer:—

"You are an insolent little fool, and I'll thrash you within an inch of your life.

"ROBERT BUTT."

After the receipt of that polite epistle, Kenelm Chillingly's scruples vanished, and he took daily lessons in muscular Christianity.

Kenelm returned to school with a brow cleared from care, and three days after his return he wrote to the Rev. John:—

"DEAR SIR,—I have licked Butt. Knowledge is power. Your affectionate

"KENELM.

"*P.S.*—Now that I have licked Butt, I have made it up with him."

From that time Kenelm prospered. Eulogistic letters from the illustrious head-master showered in upon Sir Peter. At the age of sixteen Kenelm Chillingly was the head of the school, and quitting it finally, brought home the following letter from his Orbilius to Sir Peter, marked 'confidential':—

"DEAR SIR PETER CHILLINGLY,—I have never felt more anxious for the future career of any of my pupils than I do for that of your son. He is so clever that, with ease to himself, he may become a great man. He is so peculiar, that it is quite as likely that he may only make himself known to the world as a great oddity. That distinguished teacher, Dr. Arnold, said that the difference between one boy and another was not so much talent as energy. Your son has talent, has energy—yet he wants something for success in life; he wants the faculty of amalgamation. He is of a melancholic and therefore unsocial temperament. He will not act in concert with others. He is lovable enough; the other boys like him, especially the smaller ones, with whom he is a sort of hero; but he has not one intimate friend. So far as school learning is concerned, he might go to college at once, and with the certainty of distinction, provided he chose to exert himself. But if I may venture to offer an advice, I should say employ the next two years in letting him see a little more of real life, and acquire a due sense of its practical objects. Send him to a private tutor who is not a pedant, but a man of letters or a man of the world, and if in the metropolis so much the better. In a word, my young friend is unlike other people; and, with qualities that might do anything in life, I fear, unless you can get him to be like other people, that he will do nothing. Excuse the freedom with which I write, and ascribe it to the singular interest with which your son has inspired me.—I have the honor to be, dear Sir Peter, yours truly,

"WILLIAM HORTON."

Upon the strength of this letter Sir Peter did not indeed summon another family council; for he did not consider that his three maiden sisters could offer any practical advice on the matter. And as to Mr. Gordon, that gentleman having gone to law on the great timber question, and having been signally beaten thereon, had informed Sir Peter that he disowned him as a cousin and despised him as a man—not exactly in those words—more covertly, and therefore more stingingly. But Sir Peter invited Mr. Mivers for a week's shooting, and requested the Rev. John to meet him.

Mr. Mivers arrived. The sixteen years that had elapsed since he was first introduced to the reader, had made no perceptible change in his appearance. It was one of his maxims that in youth a man of the world should appear older than he is; and in middle age, and thence to his dying day, younger. And he announced one secret for attaining that art in these words: "Begin your wig early, thus you never become gray."

Unlike most philosophers, Mivers made his practice conform to his precepts; and while in the prime of youth inaugurated a wig in a fashion that defied the flight of time, not curly and hyacinthine, but straight-haired and unassuming. He looked five-and-thirty from the day he put on that wig at the age of twenty-five. He looked five-and-thirty now at the age of fifty-one.

"I mean," said he, "to remain thirty-five all my life. No better age to stick at. People may choose to say I am more, but I shall not own it. No one is bound to criminate himself."

Mr. Mivers had some other aphorisms on this important subject. One was, "Refuse to be ill. Never tell people you are ill; never own it to yourself. Illness is one of those things which a man should resist on principle at the

onset. It should never be allowed to get in the thin end of the wedge. But take care of your constitution, and, having ascertained the best habits for it, keep to them like clockwork." Mr. Mivers would not have missed his constitutional walk in the Park before breakfast, if, by going in a cab to St. Giles's, he could have saved the city of London from conflagration.

Another aphorism of his was, "If you want to keep young, live in a metropolis; never stay above a few weeks at a time in the country. Take two men of similar constitution at the age of twenty-five; let one live in London and enjoy a regular sort of club life; send the other to some rural district, preposterously called 'salubrious.' Look at these men when they have both reached the age of forty-five. The London man has preserved his figure, the rural man has a paunch. The London man has an interesting delicacy of complexion; the face of the rural man is cross-grained and perhaps jowly."

A third axiom was, "Don't be a family man; nothing ages one like matrimonial felicity and paternal ties. Never multiply cares, and pack up your life in the briefest compass you can. Why add to your carpet-bag of troubles the contents of a lady's imperials and bonnet-boxes, and the travelling *fourgon* required by the nursery. Shun ambition—it is so gouty. It takes a great deal out of a man's life, and gives him nothing worth having till he has ceased to enjoy it."

Another of his aphorisms was this, "A fresh mind keeps the body fresh. Take in the ideas of the day, drain off those of yesterday. As to the morrow, time enough to consider it when it becomes to-day."

Preserving himself by attention to these rules, Mr. Mivers appeared at Exmundham *totus, teres,* but not *rotundus*—a man of middle height, slender, upright, with well-cut, small, slight features, thin lips, enclosing an excellent set of teeth, even, white, and not indebted to the dentist. For the sake of those teeth he shunned acid wines, especially hock in all its varieties, culinary sweets, and hot drinks. He drunk even his tea cold. "There are," he said, "two things in life that a sage must preserve at every sacrifice, the coats of his stomach and the enamel of his teeth. Some evils admit of consolations: there are no comforters for dyspepsia and toothache." A man of letters, but a man of the world, he had so cultivated his mind as both, that he was feared as the one, and liked as the other. As a man of letters he despised the world; as a man of the world he despised letters. As the representative of both he revered himself.

CHAPTER IX.

On the evening of the third day from the arrival of Mr. Mivers, he, the Parson, and Sir Peter were seated in the host's parlor, the Parson in an arm-chair by the ingle, smoking a short cutty-pipe; Mivers at length on the couch slowly inhaling the perfumes of one of his own choice *trabucos.* Sir Peter never smoked. There were spirits and hot water and lemons on the table. The Parson was famed for skill in the composition of toddy. From time to time the Parson sipped his glass, and Sir Peter, less frequently, did the same. It is needless to say that Mr. Mivers eschewed toddy: but beside him, on a chair, was a tumbler and large carafe of iced water.

Sir Peter.—"Cousin Mivers, you have now had time to study Kenelm, and to compare his character with that assigned to him in the Doctor's letter."

Mivers (languidly).—"Ay."

Sir Peter.—"I ask you, as a man of the world, what you think I had best do with the boy? Shall I send him to such a tutor as the Doctor suggests? Cousin John is not of the same mind as the Doctor, and thinks that Kenelm's oddities are fine things in their way, and should not be prematurely ground out of him by contact with worldly tutors and London pavements."

"Ay," repeated Mr. Mivers, more languidly than before. After a pause he added, "Parson John, let us hear you."

The Parson laid aside his cutty-pipe, and emptied his fourth tumbler of toddy, then, throwing back his head in the dreamy fashion of the great Coleridge when he indulged in a monologue, he thus began, speaking somewhat through his nose—

"At the morning of life——"

Here Mivers shrugged his shoulders, turned round on his couch, and closed his eyes with the sigh of a man resigning himself to a homily.

"At the morning of life, when the dews——"

"I knew the dews were coming," said Mivers. "Dry them, if you please; nothing so unwholesome. We anticipate what you mean to say, which is plainly this—When a fellow is sixteen he is very fresh; so he is—pass on—what then?"

"If you mean to interrupt me with your habitual cynicism," said the Parson, "why did you ask to hear me?"

"That was a mistake, I grant; but who on earth could conceive that you were going to commence in that florid style. Morning of life indeed!—bosh!"

"Cousin Mivers," said Sir Peter, "you are not reviewing John's style in 'The Londoner;' and I will beg you to remember that my son's morning of life is a serious thing to his father, and not to be nipped in its bud by a cousin. Proceed, John!"

Quoth the Parson, good-humoredly, "I will adapt my style to the taste of my critic. When a fellow is at the age of sixteen, and very fresh to life, the question is whether he should begin thus prematurely to exchange the ideas that belong to youth for the ideas that properly belong to middle age,—whether he should begin to acquire that knowledge of the world which middle-aged men have acquired and can teach. I think not. I would rather have him yet awhile in the company of the poets—in the indulgence of glorious hopes and beautiful dreams, forming to himself some type of the Heroic, which he will keep before his eyes as a standard when he goes into the world as man. There are two schools of thought for the formation of character—the Real and Ideal. I would form the character in the Ideal school, in order to make it bolder and grander and lovelier when it takes its place in that everyday life which is called the Real. And therefore I am not for placing the descendant of Sir Kenelm Digby, in the interval between school and college, with a man of the world, probably as cynical as cousin Mivers, and living in the stony thoroughfares of London."

Mr. Mivers (rousing himself).—"Before we plunge into that Serbonian bog—the controversy between the Realistic and the Idealistic academicians—I think the first thing to decide is what you want Kenelm to be hereafter. When I order a pair of shoes, I decide beforehand what kind of shoes they are to be—court pumps or strong walking-shoes; and I don't ask the shoemaker to give me a preliminary lecture upon the different purposes of locomotion to which leather can be applied. If, Sir Peter, you want Kenelm to scribble lackadaisical poems, listen to Parson John; if you want to fill his head with pastoral rubbish about innocent love, which may end in marrying the Miller's Daughter, listen to Parson John; if you want him to enter life a soft-headed greenhorn, who will sign any bill carrying 50 per cent. to which a young scamp asks him to be security, listen to Parson John; in fine, if you wish a clever lad to become either a pigeon or a ring-dove, a credulous booby or a sentimental milksop, Parson John is the best adviser you can have."

"But I don't want my son to ripen into either of those imbecile developments of species."

"Then don't listen to Parson John; and there's an end of the discussion."

"No, there is not. I have not heard your advice what to do if John's advice is not to be taken."

Mr. Mivers hesitated. He seemed puzzled.

"The fact is," said the Parson, "that Mivers got up 'The Londoner' upon a principle that regulates his own mind,—find fault with the way everything is done, but never commit yourself by saying how anything can be done better."

"That is true," said Mivers, candidly. "The destructive order of mind is seldom allied to the constructive. I and 'The Londoner' are destructive by nature and by policy. We can reduce a building into rubbish, but we don't profess to turn rubbish into a building. We are critics, and, as you say, not such fools as to commit ourselves to the proposition of amendments that can be criticised by others. Nevertheless, for your sake, cousin Peter, and on the condition that if I give my advice you will never say that I gave it, and if you take it, that you will never reproach me if it turns out, as most advice does, very ill—I will depart from my custom and hazard my opinion."

"I accept the conditions."

"Well, then, with every new generation there springs up a new order of ideas. The earlier the age at which man seizes the ideas that will influence his own generation, the more

he has a start in the race with his contemporaries. If Kenelm comprehends at sixteen those intellectual signs of the time which, when he goes up to college, he will find young men of eighteen or twenty only just *prepared* to comprehend, he will produce a deep impression of his powers for reasoning, and their adaptation to actual life, which will be of great service to him later. Now the ideas that influence the mass of the rising generation never have their well-head in the generation itself: they have their source in the generation before them, generally in a small minority, neglected or contemned by the great majority which adopt them later. Therefore a lad at the age of sixteen, if he wants to get at such ideas, must come into close contact with some superior mind in which they were conceived twenty or thirty years before. I am consequently for placing Kenelm with a person from whom the new ideas can be learned. I am also for his being placed in the metropolis during the process of this initiation. With such introductions as are at our command, he may come in contact not only with new ideas, but with eminent men in all vocations. It is a great thing to mix betimes with clever people. One picks their brains unconsciously. There is another advantage, and not a small one, in this early entrance into good society. A youth learns manners, self-possession, readiness of resource; and he is much less likely to get into scrapes and contract tastes for low vices and mean dissipation, when he comes into life wholly his own master, after having acquired a predilection for refined companionship, under the guidance of those competent to select it. There, I have talked myself out of breath. And you had better decide at once in favor of my advice; for as I am of a contradictory temperament, myself of to-morrow may probably contradict myself of to-day."

Sir Peter was greatly impressed with his cousin's argumentative eloquence.

The Parson smoked his cutty pipe in silence until appealed to by Sir Peter, and he then said, "In this programme of education for a Christian gentleman, the part of Christian seems to me left out."

"The tendency of the age," observed Mr. Mivers, calmly, "is towards that omission. Secular education is the necessary reaction from the special theological training which arose in the dislike of one set of Christians to the teaching of another set; and as these antagonists will not agree how religion is to be taught, either there must be no teaching at all, or religion must be eliminated from the tuition."

"That may do very well for some huge system of national education," said Sir Peter, "but it does not apply to Kenelm, as one of a family all of whose members belong to the Established Church. He may be taught the creed of his forefathers without offending a Dissenter."

"Which Established Cburch is he to belong to?" asked Mr. Mivers—"High Church, Low Church, Broad Church, Puseyite Church, Ritualistic Church, or any other Established Church that may be coming into fashion?"

"Pshaw!" said the Parson. "That sneer is out of place. You know very well that one merit of our Church is the spirit of toleration, which does not magnify every variety of opinion into a heresy or a schism. But if Sir Peter sends his son at the age of sixteen to a tutor who eliminates the religion of Christianity from his teaching, he deserves to be thrashed within an inch of his life; and," continued the Parson, eyeing Sir Peter sternly, and mechanically turning up his cuffs, "I should *like* to thrash him."

"Gently, John," said Sir Peter, recoiling; "gently, my dear kinsman. My heir shall not be educated as a heathen, and Mivers is only bantering us. Come, Mivers, do you happen to know among your London friends some man who, though a scholar and a man of the world, is still a Christian?"

"A Christian as by law established?"

"Well—yes."

"And who will receive Kenelm as a pupil?"

"Of course I am not putting such questions to you out of idle curiosity."

"I know exactly the man. He was originally intended for orders, and is a very learned theologian. He relinquished the thought of the clerical profession on succeeding to a small landed estate by the sudden death of an elder brother. He then came to London and bought experience—that is, he was naturally generous—he became easily taken in—got into difficulties—the estate was transferred to trustees, for the benefit of creditors, and on the payment of £400 a year to himself. By this time he was married and had two children. He found the necessity of employing his pen in order to add to his income, and is one of the ablest con-

tributors to the periodical press. He is an elegant scholar, an effective writer, much courted by public men, a thorough gentleman, has a pleasant house, and receives the best society. Having been once taken in, he defies anyone to take him in again. His experience was not bought too dearly. No more acute and accomplished man of the world. The three hundred a year or so that you would pay for Kenelm would suit him very well. His name is Welby, and he lives in Chester-Square."

"No doubt he is a contributor to 'The Londoner,'" said the Parson, sarcastically.

"True. He writes our classical, theological, and metaphysical articles. Suppose I invite him to come here for a day or two, and you can see him and judge for yourself, Sir Peter?"

"Do."

CHAPTER X.

Mr. Welby arrived, and pleased everybody. A man of the happiest manners, easy and courteous. There was no pedantry in him, yet you could soon see that his reading covered an extensive surface, and here and there had dived deeply. He enchanted the Parson by his comments on St. Chrysostom; he dazzled Sir Peter with his lore in the antiquities of ancient Britain; he captivated Kenelm by his readiness to enter into that most disputatious of sciences called metaphysics; while for Lady Chillingly, and the three sisters who were invited to meet him, he was more entertaining, but not less instructive. Equally at home in novels and in good books, he gave to the spinsters a list of innocent works in either; while for Lady Chillingly he sparkled with anecdotes of fashionable life, the newest *bons mots*, the latest scandals. In fact, Mr. Welby was one of those brilliant persons who adorn any society amidst which they are thrown. If at heart he was a disappointed man, the disappointment was concealed by an even serenity of spirits; he had entertained high and justifiable hopes of a brilliant career and a lasting reputation as a theologian and a preacher; the succession to his estate at the age of twenty-three had changed the nature of his ambition. The charm of his manner was such that he sprang at once into the fashion, and became beguiled by his own genial temperament into that lesser but pleasanter kind of ambition which contents itself with social successes, and enjoys the present hour. When his circumstances compelled him to eke out his income by literary profits, he slid into the grooves of periodical composition, and resigned all thoughts of the labor required for any complete work, which might take much time and be attended with scanty profits. He still remained very popular in society, and perhaps his general reputation for ability made him fearful to hazard it by any great undertaking. He was not, like Mivers, a despiser of all men and all things; but he regarded men and things as an indifferent though good-natured spectator regards the thronging streets from a drawing-room window. He could not be called *blasé*, but he was thoroughly *désillusionné*. Once over-romantic, his character now was so entirely imbued with the neutral tints of life that romance offended his taste as an obtrusion of violent color into a sober woof. He was become a thorough dealist in his code of criticism, and in his worldly mode of action and thought. But Parson John did not perceive this, for Welby listened to that gentleman's eulogies on the Ideal school without troubling himself to contradict them. He had grown too indolent to be combative in conversation, and only as a critic betrayed such pugnacity as remained to him by the polished cruelty of sarcasm.

He came off with flying colors through an examination into his Church orthodoxy instituted by the Parson and Sir Peter. Amid a cloud of ecclesiastical erudition, his own opinions vanished in those of the Fathers. In truth, he was a Realist in religion as in everything else. He regarded Christianity as a type of existent civilization, which ought to be reverenced, as one might recognize the other types of that civilization—such as the liberty of the press, the representative system, white neckcloths and black coats of an evening, etc. He belonged, therefore, to what he himself called the school of Eclectical Christiology, and accommodated the reasonings of Deism to the doctrines of the Church, if not as a creed, at least as an institution. Finally, he united all the Chillingly votes in his favor; and when he departed from the Hall, carried off Kenelm for his initiation into the new ideas that were to govern his generation.

CHAPTER XI.

KENELM remained a year and a half with this distinguished preceptor. During that time he learned much in book-lore; he saw much, too, of the eminent men of the day, in literature, the law, and the senate. He saw, also, a good deal of the fashionable world. Fine ladies, who had been friends of his mother in her youth, took him up, counselled and petted him. One in especial, the Marchioness of Glenalvon, to whom he was endeared by grateful association. For her youngest son had been a fellow-pupil of Kenelm's at Merton School, and Kenelm had saved his life from drowning. The poor boy died of consumption later, and her grief for his loss made her affection for Kenelm yet more tender. Lady Glenalvon was one of the queens of the London world. Though in her fiftieth year, she was still very handsome: she was also very accomplished, very clever, and very kind-hearted, as some of such queens are; just one of those women invaluable in forming the manners and elevating the character of young men destined to make a figure in after-life. But she was very angry with herself in thinking that she failed to arouse any such ambition in the heir of the Chillinglys.

It may here be said that Kenelm was not without great advantages of form and countenance. He was tall, and the youthful grace of his proportions concealed his physical strength, which was extraordinary rather from the iron texture than the bulk of his thews and sinews. His face, though it certainly lacked the roundness of youth, had a grave, sombre, haunting sort of beauty, not artistically regular, but picturesque, peculiar, with large dark expressive eyes, and a certain indescribable combination of sweetness and melancholy in his quiet smile. He never laughed audibly, but he had a quick sense of the comic, and his eye would laugh when his lips were silent. He would say queer, droll, unexpected things, which passed for humor; but, save for that gleam in the eye, he could not have said them with more seeming innocence of intentional joke if he had been a monk of La Trappe looking up from the grave he was digging in order to utter "memento mori."

That face of his was a great 'take in.' Women thought it full of romantic sentiment —the face of one easily moved to love, and whose love would be replete alike with poetry and passion. But he remained as proof as the youthful Hippolytus to all female attraction. He delighted the parson by keeping up his practice in athletic pursuits, and obtained a reputation at the pugilistic school, which he attended regularly, as the best gentleman boxer about town.

He made many acquaintances, but still formed no friendships. Yet every one who saw him much conceived affection for him. If he did not return that affection, he did not repel it. He was exceedingly gentle in voice and manner, and had all his father's placidity of temper—children and dogs took to him as by instinct.

On leaving Mr. Welby's, Kenelm carried to Cambridge a mind largely stocked with the new ideas that were budding into leaf. He certainly astonished the other freshmen, and occasionally puzzled the mighty Fellows of Trinity and St. John's. But he gradually withdrew himself much from general society. In fact, he was too old in mind for his years; and after having mixed in the choicest circles of a metropolis, college-suppers and wine-parties had little charm for him. He maintained his pugilistic renown; and on certain occasions, when some delicate undergraduate had been bullied by some gigantic bargeman, his muscular Christianity nobly developed itself. He did not do as much as he might have done in the more intellectual ways of academical distinction. Still, he was always among the first in the college examinations; he won two university prizes, and took a very creditable degree, after which he returned home, more saturnine—in short, less like other people—than when he had left Merton School. He had woven a solitude round him out of his own heart, and in that solitude he sate still and watchful as a spider sits in his web.

Whether from natural temperament, or from his educational training under such teachers as Mr. Mivers, who carried out the new ideas of reform by revering nothing in the past, and Mr. Welby, who accepted the routine of the present as realistic, and pooh-poohed all visions of the future as idealistic, Kenelm's chief mental characteristic was a kind of tranquil indifferentism. It was difficult to detect in him either of those ordinary incentives to action—vanity or ambition, the yearning for applause or the desire of power. To all female fasci-

nations he had been hitherto star-proof. He had never experienced love, but he had read a good deal about it, and that passion seemed to him an unaccountable aberration of human reason, and an ignominious surrender of the equanimity of thought which it should be the object of masculine natures to maintain undisturbed. A very eloquent book in praise of celibacy, and entitled 'The Approach to the Angels,' written by that eminent Oxford scholar, Decimus Roach, had produced so remarkable an effect upon his youthful mind, that, had he been a Roman Catholic, he might have become a monk. Where he most evinced ardor, it was a logician's ardor for abstract truth—that is, for what *he* considered truth; and as what seems truth to one man is sure to seem falsehood to some other man, this predilection of his was not without its inconveniences and dangers, as may probably be seen in the following chapter.

Meanwhile, rightly to appreciate his conduct therein, I entreat thee, O candid Reader (not that any Reader ever is candid), to remember that he is brimful of new ideas, which, met by a deep and hostile undercurrent of old ideas, become more provocatively billowy and surging.

CHAPTER XII.

There had been great festivities at Exmundham, in celebration of the honor bestowed upon the world by the fact that Kenelm Chillingly had lived twenty-one years in it.

The young heir had made a speech to the assembled tenants and other admitted revellers, which had by no means added to the exhilaration of the proceedings. He spoke with a fluency and self-possession which were surprising in a youth addressing a multitude for the first time. But his speech was not cheerful.

The principal tenant on the estate, in proposing his health, had naturally referred to the long line of his ancestors. His father's merits as man and landlord had been enthusiastically commemorated, and many happy auguries for his own future career had been drawn, partly from the excellences of his parentage, partly from his own youthful promise in the honors achieved at the university.

Kenelm Chillingly in reply, largely availed himself of those new ideas which were to influence the rising generation, and with which he had been rendered familiar by the journal of Mr. Mivers and the conversation of Mr. Welby.

He briefly disposed of the ancestral part of the question. He observed that it was singular to note how long any given family or dynasty could continue to flourish in any given nook of matter in creation, without any exhibition of intellectual powers beyond those displayed by a succession of vegetable crops. "It is certainly true," he said, "that the Chillinglys have lived in this place from father to son for about a fourth part of the history of the world, since the date which Sir Isaac Newton assigns to the Deluge. But, so far as can be judged by existent records, the world has not been in any way wiser or better for their existence. They were born to eat as long as they could eat, and when they could eat no longer they died. Not that in this respect they were a whit less insignificant than the generality of their fellow-creatures. Most of us now present," continued the youthful orator, "are only born in order to die; and the chief consolation of our wounded pride in admitting this fact, is in the probability that our posterity will not be of more consequence to the scheme of nature than we ourselves are." Passing from that philosophical view of his own ancestors in particular, and of the human race in general, Kenelm Chillingly then touched with serene analysis on the eulogies lavished on his father as man and landlord.

"As man," he said, "my father no doubt deserves all that can be said by man in favor of man. But what, at the best, is man? A crude, struggling, undeveloped embryo, of whom it is the highest attribute that he feels a vague consciousness that he is only an embryo, and cannot complete himself till he ceases to be a man; that is, until he becomes another being in another form of existence. We can praise a dog as a dog, because a dog is a completed *ens*, and not an embryo. But to praise a man as man, forgetting that he is only a germ out of which a form wholly different is ultimately to spring, is equally opposed to Scriptural belief in his present crudity and imperfection, and to psychological or metaphysical examination of a mental construction evidently designed for purposes that he can never fulfil

as man. That my father is an embryo not more incomplete than any present, is quite true; but that, you will see on reflection, is saying very little on his behalf. Even in the boasted physical formation of us men, you are aware that the best-shaped amongst us, according to the last scientific discoveries, is only a development of some hideous hairy animal, such as a gorilla; and the ancestral gorilla itself had its own aboriginal forefather in a small marine animal shaped like a two-necked bottle. The probability is that, some day or other, we shall be exterminated by a new development of species.

"As for the merits assigned to my father as landlord, I must respectfully dissent from the panegyrics so rashly bestowed on him. For all sound reasoners must concur in this, that the first duty of an owner of land is not to the occupiers to whom he leases it, but to the nation at large. It is his duty to see that the land yields to the community the utmost it can yield. In order to effect this object, a landlord should put up his farm to competition, exacting the highest rent he can possibly get from responsible competitors. Competitive examination is the enlightened order of the day, even in professions in which the best men would have qualities that defy examination. In agriculture, happily, the principle of competitive examination is not so hostile to the choice of the best men as it must be, for instance, in diplomacy, where a Talleyrand would be excluded for knowing no language but his own; and still more in the army, where promotion would be denied to an officer who, like Marlborough, could not spell. But in agriculture a landlord has only to inquire who can give the highest rent, having the largest capital, subject by the strictest penalties of law to the conditions of a lease dictated by the most scientific agriculturists under penalties fixed by the most cautious conveyances. By this mode of procedure, recommended by the most liberal economists of our age—barring those still more liberal who deny that property in land is any property at all—by this mode of procedure, I say a landlord does his duty to his country. He secures tenants who can produce the most to the community by their capital, tested through competitive examination into their bankers' accounts and the security they can give, and through the rapidity of covenants suggested by Liebig and reduced into law by a Chitty. But on my father's land I see a great many tenants with little skill and less capital, ignorant of a Liebig and revolting from a Chitty, and no filial enthusiasm can induce me honestly to say that my father is a good landlord. He has preferred his affection for individuals to his duties to the community. It is not, my friends, a question whether a handful of farmers like yourselves go to the workhouse or not. It is a consumer's question. Do you produce the maximum of corn to the consumer?

"With respect to myself," continued the orator, warming, as the cold he had engendered in his audience became more freezingly felt—"with respect to myself, I do not deny that, owing to the accident of training for a very faulty and contracted course of education, I have obtained what are called 'honors' at the University of Cambridge; but you must not regard that fact as a promise of any worth in my future passage through life. Some of the most useless persons—especially narrow-minded and bigoted—have acquired far higher honors at the university than have fallen to my lot.

"I thank you no less for the civil things you have said of me and of my family; but I shall endeavor to walk to that grave to which we are all bound with a tranquil indifference as to what people may say of me in so short a journey. And the sooner, my friends, we get to our journey's end, the better our chance of escaping a great many pains, troubles, sins, and diseases. So that when I drink to your good healths, you must feel that in reality I wish you an early deliverance from the ills to which flesh is exposed, and which so generally increase with our years, that good health is scarcely compatible with the decaying faculties of old age. Gentlemen, your good healths!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE morning after these birthday rejoicings, Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly held a long consultation on the peculiarities of their heir, and the best mode of instilling into his mind the expediency either of entertainining more pleasing views, or at least of professing less unpopular sentiments—compatibly of course, though

they did not say it, with the new ideas that were to govern his century. Having come to an agreement on this delicate subject, they went forth, arm in arm, in search of their heir; Kenelm seldom met them at breakfast. He was an earlier riser, and accustomed to solitary rambles before his parents were out of bed.

The worthy pair found Kenelm seated on the banks of a trout-stream that meandered through Chillingly Park, dipping his line into the water, and yawning, with apparent relief in that operation.

"Does fishing amuse you, my boy?" said Sir Peter, heartily.

"Not in the least, sir," answered Kenelm.

"Then why do you do it?" asked Lady Chillingly.

"Because I know nothing else that amuses me more."

"Ah! that is it," said Sir Peter; "the whole secret of Kenelm's oddities is to be found in these words, my dear; he needs amusement. Voltaire says truly, 'amusement is one of the wants of man.' And if Kenelm could be amused like other people, he would be like other people."

"In that case," said Kenelm, gravely, and extracting from the water a small but lively trout, which settled itself in Lady Chillingly's lap—"in that case I would rather not be amused. I have no interest in the absurdities of other people. The instinct of self-preservation compels me to have some interest in my own."

"Kenelm, sir," exclaimed Lady Chillingly, with an animation into which her tranquil ladyship was very rarely betrayed, "take away that horrid damp thing! Put down your rod and attend to what your father says. Your strange conduct gives us cause of serious anxiety."

Kenelm unhooked the trout, deposited the fish in his basket, and raising his large eyes to his father's face, said, "What is there in my conduct that occasions you displeasure?"

"Not displeasure, Kenelm," said Sir Peter, kindly, "but anxiety; your mother has hit upon the right word. You see, my dear son, that it is my wish that you should distinguish yourself in the world. You might represent this county, as your ancestors have done before. I had looked forward to the proceedings of yesterday as an admirable occasion for your introduction to your future constituents. Oratory is the talent most appreciated in a free country, and why should you not be an orator? Demosthenes says that delivery, delivery, delivery, is the art of oratory; and your delivery is excellent, graceful, self-possessed, classical."

"Pardon me, my dear father, Demosthenes does not say delivery, nor action, as the word is commonly rendered; he says, 'acting or stage-play'—ὑπόκρισις; the art by which a man delivers a speech in a feigned character—whence we get the word hypocrisy. Hypocrisy, hypocrisy, hypocrisy! is, according to Demosthenes, the triple art of the orator. Do you wish me to become triply a hypocrite?"

"Kenelm, I am ashamed of you. You know as well as I do that it is only by metaphor that you can twist the word ascribed to the great Athenian into the sense of hypocrisy. But assuming it, as you say, to mean not delivery, but acting, I understand why your *debut* as an orator was not successful. Your delivery was excellent, your acting defective. An orator should please, conciliate, persuade, prepossess. You did the reverse of all this; and though you produced a great effect, the effect was so decidedly to your disadvantage, that it would have lost you an election on any hustings in England."

"Am I to understand, my dear father," said Kenelm, in the mournful and compassionate tones with which a pious minister of the Church reproves some abandoned and hoary sinner—"am I to understand that you would commend to your son the adoption of deliberate falsehood for the gain of a selfish advantage?"

"Deliberate falsehood! you impertinent puppy!"

"Puppy!" repeated Kenelm, not indignantly but musingly—"puppy!—a well-bred puppy takes after its parents."

Sir Peter burst out laughing.

Lady Chillingly rose with dignity, shook her gown, unfolded her parasol, and stalked away speechless.

"Now, look you, Kenelm," said Sir Peter, as soon as he had composed himself. "These quips and humors of yours are amusing enough to an eccentric man like myself, but they will not do for the world; and how at your age, and with the rare advantages you have had in an early introduction to the best intellectual society, under the guidance of a tutor acquainted with the new ideas which are to influence the conduct of statesmen, you could have made so

silly a speech as you did yesterday, I cannot understand."

"My dear father, allow me to assure you that the ideas I expressed are the new ideas most in vogue—ideas expressed in still plainer, or, if you prefer the epithet, still sillier terms than I employed. You will find them instilled into the public mind by 'The Londoner,' and by most intellectual journals of a liberal character."

"Kenelm, Kenelm, such ideas would turn the world topsy-turvy."

"New ideas always do tend to turn old ideas topsy-turvy. And the world, after all, is only an idea, which is turned topsy-turvy with every successive century."

"You make me sick of the word ideas. Leave off your metaphysics and study real life."

"It is real life which I did study under Mr. Welby. He is the Archimandrite of Realism. It is a sham life which you wish me to study. To oblige you I am willing to commence it. I dare say it is very pleasant. Real life is not; on the contrary—dull." And Kenelm yawned again.

"Have you no young friends among your fellow-collegians?"

"Friends! certainly not, sir. But I believe I have some enemies, who answer the same purpose as friends, only they don't hurt one so much."

"Do you mean to say that you lived alone at Cambridge?"

"No, I lived a good deal with Aristophanes, and a little with Conic Sections and Hydrostatics."

"Books. Dry company."

"More innocent, at least, than moist company. Did you ever get drunk, sir?"

"Drunk!"

"I tried to do so once with the young companions whom you would commend to me as friends. I don't think I succeeded, but I woke with a headache. Real life at college abounds with headache."

"Kenelm, my boy, one thing is clear—you must travel."

"As you please, sir. Marcus Antoninus says that it is all one to a stone whether it be thrown upwards or downwards. When shall I start?"

"Very soon. Of course there are preparations to make; you should have a travelling companion. I don't mean a tutor—you are too clever and too steady to need one—but a pleasant, sensible, well-mannered young person of your own age."

"My own age—male or female?"

Sir Peter tried hard to frown. The utmost he could do was to reply gravely, "FEMALE! If I said you were too steady to need a tutor, it was because you have hitherto seemed little likely to be led out of your way by female allurements. Among your other studies may I inquire if you have included that which no man has ever yet thoroughly mastered—the study of woman?"

"Certainly. Do you object to my catching another trout?"

"Trout be——blest, or the reverse. So you have studied woman. I should never have thought it. Where and when did you commence that department of science?"

"When? ever since I was ten years old. Where? first in your own house, then at college. Hush!—a bite," and another trout left its native element and alighted on Sir Peter's nose, whence it was solemnly transferred to the basket.

"At ten years old, and in my own house. That flaunting hussy Jane, the under-housemaid——"

"Jane! No, sir. Pamela, Miss Byron, Clarissa—females in Richardson, who, according to Dr. Johnson, 'taught the passions to move at the command of virtue.' I trust for your sake that Dr. Johnson did not err in that assertion, for I found all these females at night in your own private apartments."

"Oh!" said Sir Peter, "that's all."

"All I remember at ten years old," replied Kenelm.

"And at Mr. Welby's or at college," proceeded Sir Peter, timorously, "was your acquaintance with females of the same kind?"

Kenelm shook his head. "Much worse; they were very naughty indeed at college."

"I should think so, with such a lot of young fellows running after them."

"Very few fellows run after the females. I mean—rather avoid them."

"So much the better."

"No, my father, so much the worse; without an intimate knowledge of those females there is little use going to college at all."

"Explain yourself."

"Every one who receives a classical educa-

tion is introduced into their society—Pyrrha and Lydia, Glycera and Corinna, and many more all of the same sort; and then the females in Aristophanes, what do you say to them, sir?"

"Is it only females who lived 2000 or 3000 years ago, or more probably never lived at all, whose intimacy you have cultivated? Have you never admired any real women?"

"Real women! I never met one. Never met a woman who was not a sham, a sham from the moment she is told to be pretty-behaved, conceal her sentiments, and look fibs when she does not speak them. But if I am to learn sham life, I suppose I must put up with sham women."

"Have you been crossed in love that you speak so bitterly of the sex?"

"I don't speak bitterly of the sex. Examine any woman on her oath, and she'll own she is a sham, always has been, and always will be, and is proud of it."

"I am glad your mother is not by to hear you. You will think differently one of these days. Meanwhile, to turn to the other sex, is there no young man of your own rank with whom you would like to travel?"

"Certainly not. I hate quarrelling."

"As you please. But you cannot go quite alone; I will find you a good travelling servant. I must write to town to-day about your preparations, and in another week or so I hope all will be ready. Your allowance will be whatever you like to fix it at; you have never been extravagant, and — boy — I love you. Amuse yourself, enjoy yourself, and come back cured of your oddities, but preserving your honor."

Sir Peter bent down and kissed his son's brow. Kenelm was moved; he rose, put his arm round his father's shoulder, and lovingly said, in an undertone, "If ever I am tempted to do a base thing, may I remember whose son I am—I shall be safe then." He withdrew his arm as he said this, and took his solitary way along the banks of the stream, forgetful of rod and line.

CHAPTER XIV.

The young man continued to skirt the side of the stream until he reached the boundary pale of the park. Here, placed on a rough grass mound, some former proprietor, of a social temperament, had built a kind of belvidere, so as to command a cheerful view of the highroad below. Mechanically the heir of the Chillinglys ascended the mound, seated himself within the belvidere, and leant his chin on his hand in a thoughtful attitude. It was rarely that the building was honored by a human visitor—its habitual occupants were spiders. Of those industrious insects it was a well-populated colony. Their webs, darkened with dust, and ornamented with the wings, and legs, and skeletons of many an unfortunate traveller, clung thick to angle and window-sill, festooned the rickety table on which the young man leant his elbow, and described geometrical circles and rhomboids between the gaping rails that formed the backs of venerable chairs. One large black spider—who was probably the oldest inhabitant, and held possession of the best place by the window, ready to offer perfidious welcome to every winged itinerant who might be tempted to turn aside from the highroad for the sake of a little cool and repose—rushed from its innermost penetralia at the entrance of Kenelm, and remained motionless in the centre of its meshes, staring at him. It did not seem quite sure whether the stranger was too big or not.

"It is a wonderful proof of the wisdom of Providence," said Kenelm, "that whenever any large number of its creatures forms a community or class, a secret element of disunion enters into the hearts of the individuals forming the congregation, and prevents their co-operating heartily and effectually for their common interest. 'The fleas would have dragged me out of bed if they had been unanimous,' said the great Mr. Curran: and there can be no doubt that if all the spiders in this commonwealth would unite to attack me in a body, I should fall a victim to their combined nippers. But spiders, though inhabiting the same region, constituting the same race, animated by the same instincts, do not combine even against a butterfly; each seeks his own special advantage, and not that of the community at large. And how completely the life of each thing resembles

a circle in this respect, that it can never touch another circle at more than one point. Nay, I doubt if it quite touches it even there,—there is a space between every atom—self is always selfish; and yet there are eminent masters in the Academe of New Ideas who wish to make us believe that all the working classes of a civilized world could merge every difference of race, creed, intellect, individual propensities and interests, into the construction of a single web, stocked as a larder in common!" Here the soliloquist came to a dead stop, and leaning out of the window, contemplated the highroad. It was a very fine highroad—straight and level, kept in excellent order by turnpikes at every eight miles. A pleasant greensward bordered it on either side, and under the belvidere the benevolence of some mediæval Chillingly had placed a little drinking-fountain for the refreshment of wayfarers. Close to the fountain stood a rude stone bench, overshadowed by a large willow, and commanding from the high table-ground on which it was placed a wide view of cornfields, meadows, and distant hills, suffused in the mellow light of the summer sun. Along that road there came successively a wagon filled with passengers seated on straw—an old woman, a pretty girl, two children; then a stout farmer going to market in his dog-cart; then three flys carrying fares to the nearest railway-station; then a handsome young man on horseback, a handsome young lady by his side, a groom behind. It was easy to see that the young man and young lady were lovers. See it in his ardent looks and serious lips parted but for whispers only to be heard by her;—see it in her downcast eyes and hightening color. "'Alas! regardless of their doom,'" muttered Kenelm, "what trouble those 'little victims' are preparing for themselves and their progeny! Would I could lend them Decimus Roach's 'Approach to the Angels'!" The road now for some minutes became solitary and still, when there was heard to the right a sprightly sort of carol, half sung, half recited, in musical voice, with a singularly clear enunciation, so that the words reached Kenelm's ear distinctly. They ran thus:—

"Black Karl looked forth from his cottage-door,
He looked on the forest green;
And down the path, with his dogs before,
Came the Ritter of Neirestein:
Singing—singing—lustily singing,
Down the path, with his dogs before,
Came the Ritter of Neirestein."

At a voice so English, attuned to a strain so Germanic, Kenelm pricked up attentive ears, and, turning his eye down the road, beheld, emerging from the shade of beeches that overhung the park pales, a figure that did not altogether harmonize with the idea of a Ritter of Neirestein. It was, nevertheless, a picturesque figure enough. The man was attired in a somewhat threadbare suit of Lincoln green, with a high-crowned Tyrolese hat; a knapsack was slung behind his shoulders, and he was attended by a white Pomeranian dog, evidently foot-sore, but doing his best to appear proficient in the chase by limping some yards in advance of his master, and sniffing into the hedges for rats and mice, and such small deer.

By the time the pedestrian had reached to the close of his refrain he had gained the fountain, and greeted it with an exclamation of pleasure. Slipping the knapsack from his shoulder, he filled the iron ladle attached to the basin. He then called to the dog by the name of Max, and held the ladle for him to drink. Not till the animal had satisfied his thirst did the master assuage his own. Then, lifting his hat and bathing his temples and face, the pedestrian seated himself on the bench, and the dog nestled on the turf at his feet. After a little pause the wayfarer began again, though in a lower and slower tone, to chant his refrain, and proceeded, with abrupt snatches, to link the verse on to another stanza. It was evident that he was either endeavoring to remember or to invent, and it seemed rather like the latter and more laborious operation of mind.

"'Why on foot, why on foot, Ritter Karl,' quoth he,
'And not on thy palfrey gray?'

Palfrey gray—hum—gray.

'The run of ill-luck was too strong for me,
And has galloped my steed away."

That will do—good!"

"Good, indeed! He is easily satisfied," muttered Kenelm. "But such pedestrians don't pass the road every day. Let us talk to him." So saying he slipped quietly out of the window, descended the mound, and letting himself into the road by a screened wicket-gate, took his noiseless stand behind the wayfarer and beneath the bowery willow.

The man had now sunk into silence. Perhaps he had tired himself of rhymes; or perhaps the mechanism of verse-making had been replaced by that kind of sentiment, or that kind of reverie, which is common to the temperaments of those who indulge in verse-making. But the loveliness of the scene before him had caught his eye and fixed it into an intent gaze upon wooded land scapes stretching farther and farther to the range of hills on which the heaven seemed to rest.

"I should like to hear the rest of that German ballad," said a voice, abruptly.

The wayfarer started, and turning round, presented to Kenelm's view a countenance in the ripest noon of manhood, with locks and beard of a deep rich auburn, bright blue eyes, and a wonderful nameless charm both of feature and expression, very cheerful, very frank, and not without a certain nobleness of character which seemed to exact respect.

"I beg your pardon for my interruption," said Kenelm, lifting his hat; "but I overheard you reciting; and though I suppose your verses are a translation from the German, I don't remember anything like them in such popular German poets as I happen to have read."

"It is not a translation, sir," replied the itinerant. "I was only trying to string together some ideas that came into my head this fine morning."

"You are a poet, then?" said Kenelm, seating himself on the bench.

"I dare not say poet. I am a verse-maker."

"Sir, I know there is a distinction. Many poets of the present day, considered very good, are uncommonly bad verse-makers. For my part, I could more readily imagine them to be good poets if they did not make verses at all. But can I not hear the rest of the ballad?"

"Alas! the rest of the ballad is not yet made. It is rather a long subject, and my flights are very brief."

"That is much in their favor, and very unlike the poetry in fashion. You do not belong, I think, to this neighborhood. Are you and your dog travelling far?"

"It is my holiday time, and I ramble on through the summer. I am travelling far, for I travel till September. Life amid summer fields is a very joyous thing."

"Is it indeed?" said Kenelm, with much *naïvete*. "I should have thought that, long before September, you would have got very much bored with the fields and the dog and yourself altogether. But, to be sure, you have the resource of verse-making, and that seems a very pleasant and absorbing occupation to those who practise it—from our old friend Horace, kneading labored Alcaics into honey in his summer rambles among the watered woodlands of Tibur, to Cardinal Richelieu employing himself on French rhymes in the intervals between chopping off noblemen's heads. It does not seem to signify much whether the verses be good or bad, so far as the pleasure of the verse-maker himself is concerned; for Richelieu was as much charmed with his occupation as Horace was, and his verses were certainly not Horatian."

"Surely at your age, sir, and with your evident education——"

"Say culture; that's the word in fashion nowadays."

"—Well, your evident culture—you must have made verses."

"Latin verses—yes—and occasionally Greek. I was obliged to do so at school. It did not amuse me."

"Try English."

Kenelm shook his head. "Not I. Every cobbler should stick to his last."

"Well, put aside the verse-making: don't you find a sensible enjoyment in those solitary summer walks, when you have Nature all to yourself—enjoyment in marking all the mobile, evanescent changes in her face—her laugh, her smile, her tears, her very frown!"

"Assuming that by Nature you mean a mechanical series of external phenomena, I object to your speaking of a machinery as if it were a person of the feminine gender—*her* laugh, *her* smile, etc. As well talk of the laugh and smile of a steam-engine. But to descend to common-sense. I grant there is some pleasure in solitary rambles in fine weather and amid varying scenery. You say that it is a holiday excursion that you are enjoying: I presume, therefore, that you have some practical occupation which consumes the time that you do not devote to a holiday?"

"Yes; I am not altogether an idler. I work sometimes, though not so hard as I ought. 'Life is earnest,' as the poet says. But I and my dog are rested now, and as I have still a long walk before me, I must wish you good day."

"I fear," said Kenelm, with a grave and sweet politeness of tone and manner, which he could command at times, and which, in its difference from merely conventional urbanity, was not without fascination—"I fear that I have offended you by a question that must have seemed to you inquisitive—perhaps impertinent; accept my excuse; it is very rarely that I meet any one who interests me; and you do." As he spoke he offered his hand, which the wayfarer shook very cordially.

"I should be a churl indeed if your question could have given me offence. It is rather perhaps I who am guilty of impertinence, if I take advantage of my seniority in years, and tender you a counsel. Do not despise Nature, or regard her as a steam-engine; you will find in her a very agreeable and conversable friend, if you will cultivate her intimacy. And I don't know a better mode of doing so at your age, and with your strong limbs, than putting a knapsack on your shoulders, and turning foot-traveller, like myself."

"Sir, I thank you for your counsel; and I trust we may meet again, and interchange ideas as to the thing you call Nature—a thing which science and art never appear to see with the same eyes. If to an artist Nature has a soul, why, so has a steam-engine. Art gifts with soul all matter that it contemplates; science turns all that is already gifted with soul into matter. Good-day, sir."

Here Kenelm turned back abruptly, and the traveller went his way, silently and thoughtfully.

CHAPTER XV.

KENELM retraced his steps homeward under the shade of his "old hereditary trees." One might have thought his path along the greenswards, and by the side of the babbling rivulet, was pleasanter and more conducive to peaceful thoughts than the broad, dusty thoroughfare along which plodded the wanderer he had quitted. But the man addicted to reverie, forms his own landscapes and colors his own skies.

"It is," soliloquized Kenelm Chillingly, "a strange yearning I have long felt—to get out of myself—to get, as it were, into another man's skin—and have a little variety of thought and emotion. One's self is always the same self; and that is why I yawn so often. But if I can't get into another man's skin, the next best thing is to get as unlike myself as I possibly can do. Let me see what is myself. Myself is Kenelm Chillingly, son and heir to a rich gentleman. But a fellow with a knapsack on his back, sleeping at wayside inns, is not at all like Kenelm Chillingly—especially if he is very short of money, and may come to want a dinner. Perhaps that sort of fellow may take a livelier view of things; he can't take a duller one. Courage, Myself,—you and I can but try."

For the next two days Kenelm was observed to be unusually pleasant. He yawned much less frequently, walked with his father, played piquet with his mother, was more like other people. Sir Peter was charmed; he ascribed this happy change to the preparations he was making for Kenelm's travelling in style. The proud father was in active correspondence with his great London friends, seeking letters of introduction to Kenelm for all the courts of Europe. Portmanteaus, with every modern convenience, were ordered; an experienced courier, who could talk all languages—and cook French dishes if required—was invited to name his terms. In short, every arrangement worthy a young patrician's entrance into the great world was in rapid progress, when suddenly Kenelm Chillingly disappeared, leaving behind him on Sir Peter's library table the following letter:—

"MY VERY DEAR FATHER,—Obedient to your desire, I depart in search of real life and real persons, or of the best imitations of them. Forgive me, I beseech you, if I commence that search in my own way. I have seen enough of ladies and gentlemen for the present—they must be all very much alike in every part of the world. You desired me to be amused. I go to try if that be possible. Ladies and gentlemen are not amusing; the more ladylike or gentlemanlike they are, the more insipid I find them. My dear father, I go in quest of adventure like Amadis of Gaul, like Don Quixote, like Gil Blas, like Roderick Random—like, in short, the only people seeking real life—the people who never existed except in books. I go on foot, I go alone. I have provided myself with a larger amount of money than I ought to spend, because every man must buy experience, and the first fees are heavy. In fact, I have put fifty pounds into my pocket-book, and into my purse five sovereigns and seventeen shillings. This sum ought to last me a year, but I daresay inexperience will do me out of it in a month, so we will count it as nothing. Since you have asked me to fix my own allowance, I will beg you kindly to commence it this day in advance, by an order to your banker to

cash my checks to the amount of five pounds, and to the same amount monthly—viz. at the rate of sixty pounds a-year. With that sum I can't starve, and if I want more it may be amusing to work for it. Pray don't send after me, or institute inquiries, or disturb the household and set all the neighborhood talking, by any mention either of my project or of your surprise at it. I will not fail to write to you from time to time.

"You will judge best what to say to my dear mother. If you tell her the truth, which of course I should do did I tell her anything, my request is virtually frustrated, and I shall be the talk of the county. You, I know, don't think telling fibs is immoral, when it happens to be convenient, as it would be in this case.

"I expect to be absent a year or eighteen months; if I prolong my travels it shall be in the way you proposed. I will then take my place in polite society, call upon you to pay all expenses, and fib on my own account to any extent required by that world of fiction which is peopled by illusions and governed by shams.

"Heaven bless you, my dear father, and be quite sure that if I get into any trouble requiring a friend, it is to you I shall turn. As yet I have no other friend on earth, and with prudence and good-luck I may escape the infliction of any other friend.—Yours ever affectionately, KENELM.

"*P.S.*—Dear father, I open my letter in your library to say again 'Bless you,' and to tell you how fondly I kissed your old beaver gloves, which I found on the table."

When Sir Peter came to that postscript he took off his spectacles and wiped them—they were very moist.

Then he fell into a profound meditation. Sir Peter was, as I have said, a learned man; he was also in some things a sensible man; and he had a strong sympathy with the humorous side of his son's crotchety character. What was to be said to Lady Chillingly? That matron was quite guiltless of any crime which should deprive her of a husband's confidence in a matter relating to her only son. She was a virtuous matron — morals irreproachable — manners dignified, and *she-baronety*. Any one seeing her for the first time would intuitively say, "Your ladyship." Was this a matron to be surpressed in any well-ordered domestic circle? Sir Peter's conscience loudly answered, "No;" but when, putting conscience into his pocket, he regarded the question at issue as a man of the world, Sir Peter felt that to communicate the contents of his son's letter to Lady Chillingly would be the foolishest thing he could possibly do. Did she know that Kenelm had absconded with the family dignity invested in his very name, no martial authority short of such abuses of power as constitute the offence of cruelty in a wife's action for divorce from social board and nuptial bed, could prevent Lady Chillingly from summoning all the grooms, sending them in all directions, with strict orders to bring back the runaway dead or alive—the walls would be placarded with handbills, "Strayed from his home," etc.,—the police would be telegraphing private instructions from town to town—the scandal would stick to Kenelm Chillingly for life, accompanied with vague hints of criminal propensities and insane hullucinations—he would be ever afterwards pointed out as "THE MAN WHO HAD DISAPPEARED." And to disappear and to turn up again, instead of being murdered, is the most hateful thing a man can do; all the newspapers bark at him, 'Tray, Blanche, Sweetheart, and all;' strict explanations of the unseemly fact of his safe existence are demanded in the name of public decorum, and no explanations are accepted—it is life saved, character lost.

Sir Peter seized his hat and walked forth, not to deliberate whether to fib or not to fib to the wife of his bosom, but to consider what kind of fib would the most quickly sink into the bosom of his wife.

A few turns to and fro on the terrace sufficed for the conception and maturing of the fib selected; a proof that Sir Peter was a practised fibber. He re-entered the house, passed into her ladyship's habitual sitting-room, and said with careless gaiety, "My old friend the Duke of Clareville is just setting off on a tour to Switzerland with his family. His youngest daughter, Lady Jane, is a pretty girl, and would not be a bad match for Kenelm."

"Lady Jane, the youngest daughter with fair hair, whom I saw last as a very charming child, nursing a lovely doll presented to her by the Empress Eugénie. A good match indeed for Kenelm."

"I am glad you agree with me. Would it not be a favorable step towards that alliance, and an excellent thing for Kenelm generally, if he were to visit the Continent as one of the Duke's travelling party?"

"Of course it would."

"Then you approve what I have done—the Duke starts the day after to-morrow, and I have packed Kenelm off to town, with a letter to my old friend. You will excuse all leave-taking. You know that though the best of sons he is an odd fellow; and seeing that I had

talked him into it, I struck while the iron was hot, and sent him off by the express at nine o'clock this morning, for fear that if I allowed any delay he would talk himself out of it."

"Do you mean to say Kenelm is actually gone? Good gracious!"

Sir Peter stole softely from the room, and summoning his valet, said, "I have sent Mr. Chillingly to London. Pack up the clothes he is likely to want, so that he can have them sent at once, whenever he writes for them."

And thus by a judicious violation of truth on the part of his father, that exemplary truth-teller Kenelm Chillingly saved the honor of his house and his own reputation from the breath of scandal and the inquisition of the police. He was not "THE MAN WHO HAD DISAPPEARED."

BOOK SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

KENELM CHILLINGLY had quitted the paternal home at daybreak before any of the household was astir.

"Unquestionably," said he, as he walked along the solitary lanes—"unquestionably I begin the world as poets begin poetry, an imitator and a plagiarist. I am imitating an itinerant verse-maker, as, no doubt, he began by imitating some other maker of verse. But if there be anything in me, it will work itself out in original form. And after all, the verse-maker is not the inventor of ideas. Adventure on foot is a notion that remounts to the age of fable. Hercules, for instance,—that was the way in which he got to heaven as a foot-traveller. How solitary the world is at this hour! Is it not for that reason that this is of all hours the most beautiful?"

Here he paused, and looked around and above. It was the very height of summer. The sun was just rising over gentle sloping uplands. All the dews on the hedgerows sparkled. There was not a cloud in the heavens. Up rose from the green blades of the corn a solitary skylark. His voice woke up the other birds. A few minutes more, and the joyous concert began. Kenelm reverently doffed his hat and bowed his head in mute homage and thanksgiving.

CHAPTER II.

ABOUT nine o'clock Kenelm entered a town some twelve miles distant from his father's house, and towards which he had designedly made his way, because in that town he was scarcely if at all known by sight, and he might there make the purchases he required without attracting any marked observation. He had selected for his travelling costume a shooting-dress, as the simplest and least likely to belong to his rank as a gentleman. But still in its very cut there was an air of distinction, and every laborer he had met on the way had touched his hat to him. Besides, who wears a shooting-dress in the middle of June, or a shooting-dress at all, unless he be either a game-keeper or a gentleman licensed to shoot?

Kenelm entered a large store-shop for ready-made clothes, and purchased a suit, such as might be worn on Sundays by a small country yeoman or tenant-farmer of a petty holding,—a stout coarse broadcloth upper garment, half coat, half jacket, with waistcoat to match, strong corduroy trousers, a smart Belcher neckcloth, with a small stock of linen and woollen socks in harmony with the other raiment. He bought also a leathern knapsack, just big enough to contain this wardrobe, and a couple of books, which, with his combs and brushes, he had brought away in his pockets. For among all his trunks at home there was no knapsack.

These purchases made and paid for, he passed quickly through the town, and stopped at a humble inn at the outskirts, to which he was attracted by the notice, "Refreshment for man and beast." He entered a little sanded parlor, which at that hour he had all to himself, called for breakfast, and devoured the best part of a fourpenny loaf, with a couple of hard eggs.

Thus recruited, he again sallied forth, and deviating into a thick wood by the roadside, he exchanged the habiliments with which he had left home for those he had purchased, and by

the help of one or two big stones sunk the relinquished garments into a small but deep pool which he was lucky enough to find in a bush-grown dell much haunted by snipes in the winter.

"Now," said Kenelm, "I really begin to think I have got out of myself. I am in another man's skin; for what, after all, is a skin but a soul's clothing, and what is clothing but a decenter skin? Of its own natural skin every civilized soul is ashamed. It is the height of impropriety for any one but the lowest kind of savage to show it. If the purest soul now existent upon earth, the Pope of Rome's or the Archbishop of Canterbury's, were to pass down the Strand with the skin which nature gave to it bare to the eye, it would be brought up before a magistrate, prosecuted by the Society for the Suppression of Vice, and committed to jail as a public nuisance.

"Decidedly I am now in another man's skin. Kenelm Chillingly, I no longer

Remain

Yours faithfully;

But am,

With profound consideration,

Your obedient humble Servant."

With light step and elated crest, the wanderer, thus transformed, sprang from the wood into the dusty thoroughfare.

He had travelled on for about an hour, meeting but few other passengers, when he heard to the right a loud shrill young voice, "Help, help!—I will not go—I tell you, I will not!" Just before him stood, by a high five-barred gate, a pensive gray cob attached to a neat-looking gig. The bridle was loose on the cob's neck. The animal was evidently accustomed to stand quietly when ordered to do so, and glad of the opportunity.

The cries, "Help, help!" were renewed, mingled with louder tones in a rougher voice, tones of wrath and menace. Evidently these sounds did not come from the cob. Kenelm looked over the gate, and saw a few yards distant, in a grass field, a well-dressed boy struggling violently against a stout middle-aged man who was rudely hauling him along by the arm.

The chivalry natural to a namesake of the valiant Sir Kenelm Digby was suddenly aroused. He vaulted over the gate, seized the man by the collar, and exclaimed, "For shame! what are you doing to that poor boy!—let him go!"

"Why the devil do you interfere?" cried the stout man—his eyes glaring and his lips foaming with rage. "Ah, are you the villain?—yes, no doubt of it. I'll give it to you, jack-anapes," and still grasping the boy with one hand, with the other the stout man darted a blow at Kenelm, from which nothing less than the practised pugilistic skill and natural alertness of the youth thus suddenly assaulted could have saved his eyes and nose. As it was, the stout man had the worst of it; the blow was parried, returned with a dexterous manœuvre of Kenelm's right foot in Cornish fashion, and *procumbit humi bos*—the stout man lay sprawling on his back. The boy, thus released, seized hold of Kenelm by the arm, and hurrying him along up the field, cried, "Come, come before he gets up! save me! save me!" Ere he had recovered his own surprise, the boy had dragged Kenelm to the gate, and jumped into the gig, sobbing forth, "Get in, get in, I can't drive; get in, and drive—you. Quick! quick!"

"But," began Kenelm.

"Get in, or I shall go mad." Kenelm obeyed, the boy gave him the reins, and seizing the whip himself, applied it lustily to the cob. On sprang the cob. "Stop—stop—stop, thief!—villain!—Holloa!—thieves—thieves—thieves!—stop!" cried a voice behind. Kenelm involuntarily turned his head and beheld the stout man perched upon the gate and gesticulating furiously. It was but a glimpse; again the whip was plied, and the cob frantically broke into a gallop, the gig jolted and bumped and swerved, and it was not till they had put a good mile between themselves and the stout man that Kenelm succeeded in obtaining possession of the whip, and calming the cob into a rational trot.

"Young gentleman," then said Kenelm, "perhaps you will have the goodness to explain."

"By-and-by; get on, that's a good fellow; you shall be well paid for it—well and handsomely."

Quoth Kenelm, gravely, "I know that in real life payment and service naturally go together. But we will put aside the payment till you tell me what is to be the service. And first, whither am I to drive you? We are com-

ing to a place where three roads meet; which of the three shall I take?"

"Oh, I don't know; there is a finger-post. I want to get to—but it is a secret; you'll not betray me. Promise—swear."

"I don't swear except when I am in a passion, which, I am sorry to say, is very seldom; and I don't promise till I know what I promise; neither do I go on driving runaway boys in other men's gigs unless I know that I am taking them to a safe place, where their papas and mammas can get at them."

"I have no papa, no mamma," said the boy dolefully, and with quivering lips.

"Poor boy. I suppose that burly brute is your schoolmaster, and you are running away home for fear of a flogging."

The boy burst out laughing; a pretty silvery merry laugh, it thrilled through Kenelm Chillingly. "No, he would not flog me; he is not a schoolmaster; he is worse than that."

"Is it possible? What is he?"

"An uncle."

"Hum! uncles are proverbial for cruelty; were so in the classical days, and Richard III. was the only scholar in his family."

"Eh! classical and Richard III.!" said the boy, startled, and looking attentively at the pensive driver. "Who are you? you talk like a gentleman."

"I beg pardon. I'll not do so again if I can help it." "Decidedly," thought Kenelm, "I am beginning to be amused. What a blessing it is to get into another man's skin, and another man's gig too!" Aloud, "Here we are at the finger-post. If you are running away from your uncle, it is time to inform me where you are running to."

Here the boy leaned over the gig and examined the finger-post. Then he clapped his hands joyfully.

"All right! I thought so—'To Tor-Hadham, eighteen miles.' That's the road to Tor-Hadham."

"Do you mean to say I am to drive you all that way—eighteen miles?"

"Yes."

"And to whom are you going?"

"I will tell you by-and-by. Do go on—do, pray. I can't drive—never drove in my life—or I would not ask you. Pray, pray, don't desert me! If you are a gentleman you will not; and if you are not a gentleman, I have got £10 in my purse which you shall have when I am safe at Tor-Hadham. Don't hesitate; my whole life is at stake!" And the boy began once more to sob.

Kenelm directed the pony's head towards Tor-Hadham, and the boy ceased to sob.

"You are a good, dear fellow," said the boy, wiping his eyes. "I am afraid I am taking you very much out of your road."

"I have no road in particular, and would as soon go to Tor-Hadham, which I have never seen, as anywhere else. I am but a wanderer on the face of the earth."

"Have you lost your papa and mamma too? Why, you are not much older than I am."

"Little gentleman," said Kenelm, gravely, "I am just of age; and you, I suppose, are about fourteen."

"What fun!" cried the boy, abruptly. "Isn't it fun?"

"It will not be fun if I am sentenced to penal servitude for stealing your uncle's gig, and robbing his little nephew of £10. By the by, that choleric relation of yours meant to knock down somebody else when he struck at me. He asked, 'Are *you* the villain?' Pray who is the villain? he is evidently in your confidence."

"Villain! he is the most honorable, high-minded——But no matter now; I'll introduce you to him when we reach Tor-Hadham. Whip that pony; he is crawling."

"It is up-hill; a good man spares his beast."

No art and no eloquence could extort from his young companion any further explanation than Kenelm had yet received; and indeed, as the journey advanced, and they approached their destination, both parties sank into silence. Kenelm was seriously considering that his first day's experience of real life in the skin of another had placed in some peril his own. He had knocked down a man evidently respectable and well to do, had carried off that man's nephew and made free with that man's goods and chattels—*i. e.*, his gig and horse. All this might be explained satisfactorily to a justice of the peace, but how? By returning to his former skin; by avowing himself to be Kenelm Chillingly, a distinguished university medalist, heir to no ignoble name and some £10,000 a year. But then what a scandal! he who abhorred scandal; in vulgar parlance, what a "row!" he who denied that the very word "row" was sanctioned by any classic authorities

in the English language. He would have to explain how he came to be found disguised, carefully disguised, in garments such as no baronet's eldest son—even though that baronet be the least ancestral man of mark whom it suits the convenience of a First Minister to recommend to the Sovereign for exaltation over the rank of Mister—was ever beheld in, unless he had taken flight to the gold-diggings. Was this a position in which the heir of the Chillinglys, a distinguished family, whose coat-of-arms dated, from the earliest authenticated period of English heraldry under Edward III. as Three Fishes *azur*, could be placed without grievous slur on the cold and ancient blood of the Three Fishes.

And then individually to himself, Kenelm, irrespectively of the Three Fishes. What a humiliation! He had put aside his respected father's deliberate preparations for his entrance into real life; he had perversely chosen his own walk on his own responsibility; and here, before half the first day was over, what an infernal scrape he had walked himself into! And what was his excuse? A wretched little boy, sobbing and chuckling by turns, and yet who was clever enough to twist Kenelem Chillingly round his finger; twist *him*—a man who thought himself so much wiser than his parents—a man who had gained honors at the University—a man of the gravest temperament—a man of so nicely a critical turn of mind that there was not a law of art or nature in which he did not detect a flaw,—that he should get himself into this mess was, to say the least of it, an uncomfortable reflection.

The boy himself, as Kenelm glanced at him from time to time, became impish and Will-of-the-Wisp-ish. Sometimes he laughed to himself loudly, sometimes he wept to himself quietly; sometimes, neither laughing nor weeping, he seemed absorbed in reflection. Twice as they came nearer to the town of Tor-Hadham, Kenelm nudged the boy, and said, "My boy, I must talk with you;" and twice the boy, withdrawing his arm from the nudge, had answered dreamily,

"Hush! I am thinking."

And so they entered the town of Tor-Hadham; the cob very much done up.

CHAPTER III.

"Now, young sir," said Kenelm, in a tone calm, but peremptory—"now we are in the town, where am I to take you? and wherever it be, there to say good-bye."

"No, not good-bye. Stay with me a little bit. I begin to feel frightened, and I am so friendless;" and the boy, who had before resented the slightest nudge on the part of Kenelm, now wound his arm into Kenelm's, and clung to him caressingly.

I don't know what my readers have hitherto thought of Kenelm Chillingly, but amid all the curves and windings of his whimsical humor, there was one way that went straight to his heart—you had only to be weaker than himself, and ask his protection.

He turned round abruptly; he forgot all the strangeness of his position, and replied: "Little brute that you are, I'll be shot if I forsake you if in trouble. But some compassion is also due to the cob—for his sake say where we are to stop."

"I am sure I can't say; I never was here before. Let us go to a nice quiet inn. Drive slowly—we'll look out for one."

Tor-Hadham was a large town, not nominally the capital of the county, but in point of trade, and bustle, and life, virtually the capital. The straight street, through which the cob went as slowly as if he had been drawing a Triumphal Car up the Sacred Hill presented an animated appearance. The shops had handsome façades and plate-glass windows; the pavements exhibited a lively concourse, evidently not merely of business, but of pleasure, for a large proportion of the passers-by was composed of the fair sex, smartly dressed, many of them young, and some pretty. In fact a regiment of Her Majesty's —th Hussars had been sent into the town two days before, and between the officers of that fortunate regiment, and the fair sex in that hospitable town, there was a natural emulation which should make the greater number of slain and wounded. The advent of these heroes, professional subtracters from hostile, and multipliers of friendly, populations, gave a stimulus to the caterers for those amusements which bring young folks together—archery-meetings, rifle-shootings, concerts, balls, announced in bills attached to boards and walls, and exposed at shop-windows.

The boy looked eagerly forth from the gig, scanning especially these advertisements, till at length he uttered an excited exclamation, "Ah, I was right—there it is!"

"There what is?" asked Kenelm. "The Inn?" His companion did not answer, but Kenelm following the boy's eyes perceived an immense hand-bill.

"To-morrow Night Theatre opens.

Richard III. Mr. Compton."

"Do just ask where the theatre is," said the boy, in a whisper, turning away his head.

Kenelm stopped the cob, made the inquiry, and was directed to take the next turning to the right. In a few minutes the compo portico of an ugly dilapidated building, dedicated to the Dramatic Muses, presented itself at the angle of a dreary deserted lane. The walls were placarded with play-bills, in which the name of Compton stood forth as gigantic as capitals could make it. The boy drew a sigh. "Now," said he, "let us look out for an inn near here—the nearest."

No inn, however, beyond the rank of a small and questionable looking public-house, was apparent, until at a distance somewhat remote from the theatre, and in a quaint, old-fashioned deserted square, a neat newly-whitewashed house displayed upon its frontispiece, in large black letters of funeral aspect, "Temperance Hotel."

"Stop," said the boy; "don't you think that would suit us? it looks quiet."

"Could not look more quiet if it were a tombstone," replied Kenelm.

The boy put his hand upon the reins and stopped the cob. The cob was in that condition that the slightest touch sufficed to stop him, though he turned his head somewhat ruefully, as if in doubt whether hay and corn would be within the regulations of a Temperance Hotel. Kenelm descended and entered the house. A tidy woman emerged from a sort of glass cupboard which constituted the bar, minus the comforting drinks associated with the *beau idéal* of a bar, but which displayed instead two large decanters of cold water with tumblers *à discretion*, and sundry plates of thin biscuits and sponge-cakes. This tidy woman politely inquired what was his "pleasure."

"Pleasure," answered Kenelm, with his usual gravity, "is not the word I should myself have chosen. But could you oblige my horse—I mean *that* horse—with a stall and a feed of oats; and that young gentleman and myself with a private room and a dinner?"

"Dinner!" echoed the hostess—"dinner!"

"A thousand pardons, ma'am. But if the word 'dinner' shock you, I retract it, and would say instead, 'something to eat and drink.'"

"Drink! This is strictly a Temperance Hotel, sir."

"Oh, if you don't eat and drink here," exclaimed Kenelm, fiercely, for he was famished, "I wish you good morning."

"Stay a bit, sir. We do eat and drink here. But we are very simple folks. We allow no fermented liquors."

"Not even a glass of beer?"

"Only ginger-beer. Alcohols are strictly forbidden. We have tea, and coffee, and milk. But most of our customers prefer the pure liquid. As for eating, sir—anything you order, in reason."

Kenelm shook his head and was retreating, when the boy, who had sprung from the gig and overheard the conversation, cried petulantly, "What does it signify? Who wants fermented liquors? Water will do very well. And as for dinner,—anything convenient. Please, ma'am, show us into a private room; I am so tired." The last words were said in a caressing manner, and so prettily, that the hostess at once changed her tone, and muttering, "poor boy!" and in a still more subdued mutter, "what a pretty face he has!" nodded, and led the way up a very clean, old-fashioned staircase.

"But the horse and gig—where are they to go?" said Kenelm, with a pang of conscience on reflecting how ill-treated hitherto had been both horse and owner.

"Oh, as for the horse and gig, sir, you will find Jukes's livery-stables a few yards farther down. We don't take in horses ourselves—our customers seldom keep them; but you will find the best of accommodation at Jukes's."

Kenelm conducted the cob to the livery-stables thus indicated, and waited to see him walked about to cool, well rubbed down, and made comfortable over half a peck of oats—for Kenelm Chillingly was a humane man to the brute creation—and then, in a state of ravenous appetite, returned to the Temperance

Hotel, and was ushered into a small drawing-room, with a small bit of carpet in the centre, six small chairs with cane seats, prints on the walls descriptive of the various effects of intoxicating liquors upon sundry specimens of mankind—some resembling ghosts, others fiends, and all with a general aspect of beggary and perdition, contrasted by Happy-Family pictures—smiling wives, portly husbands, rosy infants, emblematic of the beatified condition of members of the Temperance Society.

A table with a spotless cloth, and knives and forks for two, chiefly, however, attracted Kenelm's attention.

The boy was standing by the window, seemingly gazing on a small aquarium which was there placed, and contained the usual variety of small fishes, reptiles and insects, enjoying the pleasures of temperance in its native element, including, of course, an occasional meal upon each other.

"What are they going to give us to eat?" inquired Kenelm. "It must be ready by this time, I should think."

Here he gave a brisk tug at the bell-pull. The boy advanced from the window, and as he did so Kenelm was struck with the grace of his bearing and the improvement in his looks, now that he was without his hat, and rest and ablution had refreshed from heat and dust the delicate bloom of his complexion. There was no doubt about it that he was an exceedingly pretty boy, and if he lived to be a man would make many a lady's heart ache. It was with a certain air of gracious superiority such as is seldom warranted by superior rank if it be less than royal, and chiefly becomes a marked seniority in years, that this young gentleman, approaching the solemn heir of the Chillinglys, held out his hand and said—

"Sir, you have behaved extremely well, and I thank you very much."

"Your royal Highness is condescending to say so," replied Kenelm Chillingly, bowing low; "but have you ordered dinner? and what are they going to give us? No one seems to answer the bell here. As it is a Temperance Hotel, probably all the servants are drunk."

"Why should they be drunk at a Temperance Hotel?"

"Why! because, as a general rule, people who flagrantly pretend to anything, are the reverse of that which they pretend to. A man who sets up for a saint is sure to be a sinner; and a man who boasts that he is a sinner, is sure to have some feeble, maudlin, snivelling bit of saintship about him which is enough to make him a humbug. Masculine honesty, whether it be saint-like or sinner-like, does not label itself either saint or sinner. Fancy St. Augustin labelling himself saint, or Robert Burns sinner; and therefore, though, little boy, you have probably not read the Poems of Robert Burns, and have certainly not read the Confessions of St. Augustin, take my word for it, that both those personages were very good fellows; and with a little difference of training and experience, Burns might have written the Confessions, and Augustin the poems. Powers above! I am starving. What did you order for dinner, and when is it to appear?"

The boy, who had opened to an enormous width a naturally large pair of hazel eyes, while his tall companion in fustian trousers and Belcher neckcloth spoke thus patronizingly of Robert Burns and St. Augustin, now replied with rather a deprecatory and shame-faced aspect, "I am sorry I was not thinking of dinner. I was not so mindful of you as I ought to have been. The landlady asked me what we would have. I said, 'What you like;' and the landlady muttered something about——" (here the boy hesitated).

"Yes. About what? Mutton-chops?"

"No. Cauliflowers and rice-pudding."

Kenelm Chillingly never swore, never raged. Where ruder beings of human mould swore or raged, he vented displeasure in an expression of countenance so pathetically melancholic and lugubrious that it would have melted the heart of an Hyrcanian tiger. He turned his countenance now on the boy, and murmuring "Cauliflower!—Starvation!" sank into one of the cane-bottomed chairs, and added quietly "so much for human gratitude!"

The boy was evidently smitten to the heart by the bitter sweetness of this reproach. There were almost tears in his voice, as he said falteringly, "Pray forgive me, I *was* ungrateful. I'll run down and see what there is;" and suiting the action to the word, he disappeared.

Kenelm remained motionless; in fact, he was plunged into one of those reveries, or rather absorptions of inward and spiritual being, into which it is said that the consciousness of the Indian Dervish can be, by prolonged fasting,

preternaturally resolved. The appetite of all men of powerful muscular development is of a nature far exceeding the properties of any reasonable number of cauliflowers and rice-puddings to satisfy. Witness Hercules himself, whose cravings for substantial nourishment were the standing joke of the classic poets. I don't know that Kenelm Chillingly would have beaten the Theban Hercules either in fighting or in eating; but when he wanted to fight or when he wanted to eat, Hercules would have had to put forth all his strength not to be beaten.

After ten minutes' absence, the boy came back radiant. He tapped Kenelm on the shoulder, and said playfully, "I made them cut a whole loin into chops, besides the cauliflower, and such a big rice-pudding, and eggs and bacon too. Cheer up! it will be served in a minute."

"A—h!" said Kenelm.

"They are good people; they did not mean to stint you; but most of their customers, it seems, live upon vegetables and farinaceous food. There is a society here formed upon that principle; the landlady says they are philosophers!"

At the word "philosophers" Kenelm's crest rose as that of a practised hunter at the cry of 'Yoiks! Tally-ho!' "Philosophers!" said he —"philosophers indeed! O ignoramuses, who do not even know the structure of the human tooth! Look you, little boy, if nothing were left on this earth of the present race of man, as we are assured upon great authority will be the case one of these days—and a mighty good riddance it will be—if nothing, I say, of man were left except fossils of his teeth and his thumbs, a philosopher of that superior race which will succeed to man would at once see in those relics all his characteristics and all his history; would say, comparing his thumb with the talons of an eagle, the claws of a tiger, the hoof of a horse, the owner of that thumb must have been lord over creatures with talons and claws and hoofs. You may say the monkey tribe has thumbs. True; but compare an ape's thumb with a man's,—could the biggest ape's thumb have built Westminster Abbey? But even thumbs are trivial evidence of man as compared with his teeth. Look at his teeth!"—here Kenelm expanded his jaws from ear to ear and displayed semicircles of ivory, so perfect for the purposes of mastication that the most artistic dentist might have despaired of his power to imitate them—"look, I say, at his teeth!" The boy involuntarily recoiled. "Are the teeth those of a miserable cauliflower-eater? or is it purely by farinaceous food that the proprietor of teeth like man's obtains the rank of the sovereign destroyer of creation? No, little boy, no," continued Kenelm, closing his jaws, but advancing upon the infant, who at each stride receded towards the aquarium—"no; man is the master of the world, because of all created beings he devours the greatest variety and the greatest number of created things. His teeth evince that man can live upon every soil from the torrid to the frozen zone, because man can eat everything that other creatures cannot eat. And the formation of his teeth proves it. A tiger can eat a deer—so can man; but a tiger can't eat an eel—man can. An elephant can eat cauliflowers and rice-pudding—so can man; but an elephant can't eat a beefsteak—man can. In sum, man can live everywhere, because he can eat anything, thanks to his dental formation!" concluded Kenelm, making a prodigious stride towards the boy. "Man, when everything else fails him, eats his own species."

"Don't; you frighten me," said the boy. "Aha!" clapping his hands with a sensation of gleeful relief, "here come the mutton-chops!"

A wonderfully clean, well-washed, indeed well-washed-out, middle-aged parlor-maid now appeared, dish in hand. Putting the dish on the table and taking off the cover, the hand-maiden said civilly, though frigidly, like one who lived upon salad and cold water, "Mistress is sorry to have kept you waiting, but she thought you were Vegetarians."

After helping his young friend to a mutton-chop, Kenelm helped himself, and replied, gravely, "Tell your mistress that if she had only given us vegetables, I should have eaten you. Tell her that though man is partially graminivorous, he is principally carnivorous. Tell her that though a swine eats cabbages and suchlike, yet where a swine can get a baby, it eats the baby. Tell her," continued Kenelm (now at his third chop), "that there is no animal that in digestive organs more resembles man than a swine. Ask her if there is any baby in the house; if so, it would be safe for the baby to send up some more chops."

As the acutest observer could rarely be quite sure when Kenelm Chillingly was in jest or in earnest, the parlor-maid paused a moment and attempted a pale smile. Kenelm lifted his dark eyes, unspeakably sad and profound, and said mournfully, "I should be so sorry for the baby. Bring the chops!" The parlor-maid vanished. The boy laid down his knife and fork, and looked fixedly and inquisitively on Kenelm. Kenelm, unheeding the look, placed the last chop on the boy's plate.

"No more," cried the boy, impulsively, and returned the chop to the dish. "I have dined —I have had enough."

"Little boy, you lie," said Kenelm; "you have not had enough to keep body and soul together. Eat that chop or I shall thrash you; whatever I say, I do."

Somehow or other the boy felt quelled; he ate the chop in silence, again looked at Kenelm's face, and said to himself, "I am afraid."

The parlor-maid here entered with a fresh supply of chops and a dish of bacon and eggs, soon followed by a rice-pudding baked in a tin dish, and of size sufficient to have nourished a charity school. When the repast was finished, Kenelm seemed to forget the dangerous properties of the carnivorous animal; and stretching himself indolently out, appeared to be as innocently ruminative as the most domestic of animals graminivorous.

Then said the boy, rather timidly, "May I ask you another favor?"

"Is it to knock down another uncle, or to steal another gig and cob?"

"No, it is very simple: it is merely to find out the address of a friend here; and when found to give him a note from me."

"Does the commission press? 'After dinner, rest a while,' saith the proverb; and proverbs are so wise that no one can guess the author of them. They are supposed to be fragments of the philosophy of the antediluvians—came to us packed up in the ark."

"Really, indeed," said the boy, seriously. "How interesting! No, my commission does not press for an hour or so. Do you think, sir, they had any drama before the Deluge?"

"Drama! not a doubt of. Men who lived one or two thousand years had time to invent and improve everything; and a play could have had its natural length then. It would not have been necessary to crowd the whole history of Macbeth, from his youth to his old age, into an absurd epitome of three hours. One cannot trace a touch of real human nature in any actor's delineation of that very interesting Scotchman, because the actor always comes on the stage as if he were the same age when he murdered Duncan, and when, in his sear and yellow leaf, he was lopped off by Macduff."

"Do you think Macbeth was young when he murdered Duncan?"

"Certainly. No man ever commits a first crime of violent nature, such as murder, after thirty; if he begins before, he may go on up to any age. But youth is the season for commencing those wrong calculations which belong to irrational hope and the sense of physical power. You thus read in the newspapers that the persons who murder their sweethearts are generally from two to six and twenty; and persons who murder from other motives than love—that is, from revenge, avarice, or ambition—are generally about twenty-eight—Iago's age. Twenty-eight is the usual close of the active season for getting rid of one's fellow-creatures—a prize-fighter falls off after that age. I take it that Macbeth was about twenty-eight when he murdered Duncan, and from about fifty-four to sixty when he began to whine about missing the comforts of old age. But can any audience understand that difference of years in seeing a three-hours' play; or does any actor ever pretend to impress it on the audience, and appear as twenty-eight in the first act and a sexagenarian in the fifth?"

"I never thought of that," said the boy, evidently interested. "But I never saw Macbeth. I have seen Richard III.—is not that nice? Don't you dote on the Play? I do. What a glorious life an actor's must be!"

Kenelm, who had been hitherto rather talking to himself than to his youthful companion, here roused his attention, looked on the boy intently, and said—

"I see you are stage-stricken. You have run away from home in order to turn player, and I should not wonder if this note you want me to give is for the manager of the theatre or one of his company."

The young face that encountered Kenelm's dark eye became very flushed, but set and *défiant* in its expression.

"And what if it were—would not you give it?"

"What! help a child of your age, run away from his home, to go upon the stage against the consent of his relations—certainly not."

"I am not a child; but that has nothing to do with it. I don't want to go on the stage, at all events without the consent of the person who has a right to dictate my actions. My note is not to the manager of the theatre, nor to one of his company, but it is to a gentleman who condescends to act here for a few nights—a thorough gentleman—a great actor—my friend, the only friend I have in the world. I say frankly I have run away from home so that he may have that note, and if you will not give it some one else will!"

The boy had risen while he spoke, and he stood erect beside the recumbent Kenelm, his lips quivering, his eyes suffused with suppressed tears, but his whole aspect resolute and determined. Evidently, if he did not get his own way in this world, it would not be for want of will.

"I will take your note," said Kenelm.

"There it is; give it into the hands of the person it is addressed to—Mr. Herbert Compton."

CHAPTER IV.

Kenelm took his way to the theatre, and inquired of the door-keeper for Mr. Herbert Compton. That functionary replied, "Mr. Compton does not act to-night, and is not in the house."

"Where does he lodge?"

The door-keeper pointed to a grocer's shop on the other side of the way, and said, tersely, "There, private door—knock and ring."

Kenelm did as he was directed. A slatternly maid-servant opened the door, and, in answer to his interrogatory, said that Mr. Compton was at home, but at supper.

"I am sorry to disturb him," said Kenelm, raising his voice, for he heard a clatter of knives and plates within a room hard by at his left, "but my business requires to see him forthwith;" and pushing the maid aside, he entered at once the adjoining banquet-hall.

Before a savoury stew smelling strongly of onions sate a man very much at his ease, without coat or neckcloth, a decidedly handsome man—his hair cut short and his face closely shaven, as befits an actor who has wigs and beards of all hues and forms at his command. The man was not alone; opposite to him sate a lady, who might be a few years younger, of a somewhat faded complexion, but still pretty, with good stage features and a profusion of blond ringlets.

"Mr. Compton, I presume," said Kenelm, with a solemn bow.

"My name is Compton: any message from the theatre? or what do you want with me?"

"I—nothing!" replied Kenelm; and then deepening his naturally mournful voice into tones omnious and tragic, continued—"By whom you are wanted let this explain;" therewith he placed in Mr. Compton's hand the letter with which he was charged, and stretching his arms and interlacing his fingers in the *pose* of Talma as Julius Cæsar, added, "'*Qu'en dis tu, brute?*'"

Whether it was from the sombre aspect and awe-inspiring delivery, or ὑπόκρισις, of the messenger, or the sight of the handwriting on the address of the missive, Mr. Compton's countenance suddenly fell, and his hand rested irresolute, as if not daring to open the letter.

"Never mind me, dear," said the lady with blond ringlets, in a tone of stinging affability; "read your *billetdoux;* don't keep the young man waiting, love!"

"Nonsense, Matilda, nonsense? *billetdoux* indeed! more likely a bill from Duke the the tailor. Excuse me for a moment, my dear. Follow me, sir," and rising, still with shirt-sleeves uncovered, he quitted the room, closing the door after him, motioned Kenelm into a small parlor on the opposite side of the passage, and by the light of a suspended gas-lamp ran his eye hastily over the letter, which, though it seemed very short, drew from him sundry exclamations. "Good heavens! how very absurd! what's to be done?" Then, thrusting the letter into his trousers-pocket, he fixed upon Kenelm a very brilliant pair of dark eyes, which soon dropped before the steadfast look of that saturnine adventurer.

"Are you in the confidence of the writer of this letter?" asked Mr. Compton, rather confusedly.

"I am not the confidant of the writer," answered Kenelm, "but for the time being I am the protector!"

"Protector!"

"Protector."

Mr. Compton again eyed the messenger, and this time fully realizing the gladiatoral development of that dark stranger's physical form, he grew many shades paler, and involuntarily retreated towards the bell-pull.

After a short pause, he said "I am requested to call on the writer. If I do so, may I understand that the interview will be strictly private?"

"So far as I am concerned, yes—on the condition that no attempt be made to withdraw the writer from the house."

"Certainly not—certainly not; quite the contrary," exclaimed Mr. Compton, with genuine animation. "Say I will call in half an hour."

"I will give your message," said Kenelm, with a polite inclination of his head; "and pray pardon me if I remind you that I styled myself the protector of your correspondent, and if the slightest advantage be taken of that correspondent's youth and inexperience, or the smallest encouragement be given to plans of abduction from home and friends, the stage will lose an ornament, and Herbert Compton vanish from the scene." With those words Kenelm left the player standing aghast. Gaining the street-door, a lad with a bandbox ran against him and was nearly upset.

"Stupid," cried the lad, "can't you see where you are going? Give this to Mrs. Compton."

"I should deserve the title you give if I did for nothing the business for which you are paid," replied Kenelm, sententiously, and striding on.

CHAPTER V.

"I HAVE fulfilled my mission," said Kenelm, on rejoining his travelling companion. "Mr. Compton said he would be here in half an hour."

"You saw him?"

"Of course; I promised to give your letter into his own hands."

"Was he alone?"

"No; at supper with his wife."

"His wife? what do you mean, sir?—wife! he has no wife."

"Appearances are deceitful. At least he was with a lady who called him 'dear' and 'love' in as spiteful a tone of voice as if she had been his wife; and as I was coming out of his street-door a lad who ran against me asked me to give a bandbox to Mrs. Compton."

The boy turned as white as death, staggered back a few steps, and dropped into a chair.

A suspicion which, during his absence, had suggested itself to Kenelm's inquiring mind, now took strong confirmation. He approached softly, drew a chair close to the companion whom fate had forced upon him, and said in a gentle whisper—

"This is no boy's agitation. If you have been deceived or misled, and I can in any way advise or aid you, count on me as women under the circumstances count on men and gentlemen."

The boy started to his feet, and paced the room with disordered steps, and a countenance working with passions which he attempted vainly to suppress. Suddenly arresting his steps, he seized Kenelm's hand, pressed it convulsively, and said, in a voice struggling against a sob—

"I thank you—I bless you. Leave me now—I would be alone. Alone, too, I must face this man. There may be some mistakc yet; go."

"You will promise not to leave the house till I return?"

"Yes, I promise that."

"And if it be as I fear, you will then let me counsel with and advise you?"

"Heaven help me, if so! Whom else should I trust to? Go—go!"

Kenelm once more found himself in the streets, beneath the mingled light of gas-lamps and the midsummer moon. He walked on mechanically till he reached the extremity of the town. There he halted, and seating himself on a milestone, indulged in these meditations:—

"Kenelm, my friend, you are in a still worse scrape than I thought you were an hour ago. You have evidently now got a woman on your hands. What on earth are you to do with her? A runaway woman, who, meaning to run off with somebody else—such are the crosses and contradictions in human destiny—has run off with you instead. What mortal can hope to be safe? The last thing I thought could befall me, when I got up this morning was that I

should have any trouble about the other sex before the day was over. If I were of an amatory temperament, the Fates might have some justification for leading me into this snare, but, as it is, those meddling old maids have none. Kenelm, my friend, do you think you ever can be in love? and, if you were in love, do you think you could be a greater fool than you are now?"

Kenelm had not decided this knotty question in the conference held with himself, when a light and soft strain of music came upon his ear. It was but from a stringed instrument, and might have sounded thin and tinkling, but for the stillness of the night, and that peculiar addition of fulness which music acquires when it is borne along a tranquil air. Presently a voice in song was heard from the distance accompanying the instrument. It was a man's voice, a mellow and a rich voice, but Kenelm's ear could not catch the words. Mechanically he moved on towards the quarter from which the sounds came, for Kenelm Chillingly had music in his soul, though he was not quite aware of it himself. He saw before him a patch of greensward, on which grew a solitary elm with a seat for wayfarers beneath it. From this sward the ground receded in a wide semicircle bordered partly by shops, partly by the tea-gardens of a pretty cottage-like tavern. Round the tables scattered throughout the gardens were grouped quiet customers, evidently belonging to the class of small trades-people or superior artisans. They had an appearance of decorous respectability, and were listening intently to the music. So were many persons at the shop-doors, and at the windows of upper rooms. On the sward, a little in advance of the tree, but beneath its shadow, stood the musician, and in that musician Kenelm recognised the wanderer from whose talk he had conceived the idea of the pedestrian excursion which had already brought him into a very awkward position. The instrument on which the singer accompanied himself was a guitar, and his song was evidently a love-song, though, as it was now drawing near to its close, Kenelm could but imperfectly guess at its general meaning. He heard enough to perceive that its words were at least free from the vulgarity which generally characterizes street ballads, and were yet simple enough to please a very homely audience.

When the singer ended there was no applause; but there was evident sensation among the audience—a feeling as if something that had given a common enjoyment had ceased. Presently the white Pomeranian dog, who had hitherto kept himself out of sight under the seat of the elm-tree, advanced, with a small metal tray between his teeth, and, after looking round him deliberately as if to select whom of the audience should be honored with the commencement of a general subscription, gravely approached Kenelm, stood on his hind-legs, stared at him, and presented the tray.

Kenelm dropped a shilling into that depository, and the dog looking gratified, took his way towards the tea-gardens.

Lifting his hat, for he was, in his way, a very polite man, Kenelm approached the singer, and, trusting to the alteration in his dress for not being recognized by a stranger who had only once before encountered him, he said—

"Judging by the little I heard, you sing very well, sir. May I ask who composed the words?"

"They are mine," replied the singer.

"And the air?"

"Mine too."

"Accept my compliments. I hope you find these manifestations of genius lucrative?"

The singer, who had not hitherto vouchsafed more than a careless glance at the rustic garb of the questioner, now fixed his eyes full upon Kenelm, and said, with a smile, "Your voice betrays you, sir. We have met before."

"True; but I did not then notice your guitar, nor, though acquainted with your poetical gifts, suppose that you selected this primitive method of making them publicly known."

"Nor did I anticipate the pleasure of meeting you again in the character of Hobnail. Hist! let us keep each other's secret. I am known hereabouts by no other designation than that of the 'Wandering Minstrel.'"

"It is in the capacity of minstrel that I address you. If it be not an impertinent question, do you know any songs which take the other side of the case?"

"What case? I don't understand you, sir."

"The song I heard seemed in praise of that sham called love. Don't you think you could say something more new and more true, treating that aberration from reason with the contempt it deserves?"

"Not if I am to get my travelling expenses paid."

"What! the folly is so popular?"

"Does not your own heart tell you so?"

"Not a bit of it—rather the contrary. Your audience at present seem folks who live by work, and can have little time for such idle phantasies—for, as it is well observed by Ovid, a poet who wrote much on that subject, and professed the most intimate acquaintance with it, 'Idleness is the parent of love.' Can't you sing something in praise of a good dinner? Everybody who works hard has an appetite for food."

The singer again fixed on Kenelm his inquiring eye, but not detecting a vestige of humor in the grave face he contemplated, was rather puzzled how to reply, and therefore remained silent.

"I perceive," resumed Kenelm, "that my observations surprise you: the surprise will vanish on reflection. It has been said by another poet, more reflective than Ovid, 'that the world is governed by love and hunger.' But hunger certainly has the lion's share of the government; and if a poet is really to do what he pretends to do—viz., represent nature—the greater part of his lays should be addressed to the stomach." Here, warming with his subject, Kenelm familiarly laid his hand on the musician's shoulder, and his voice took a tone bordering on enthusiasm. "You will allow that a man in the normal condition of health, does not fall in love every day. But in the normal condition of health he is hungry every day. Nay, in those early years when you poets say he is most prone to love, he is so especially disposed to hunger that less than three meals a-day can scarcely satisfy his appetite. You may imprison a man for months, for years, nay, for his whole life—from infancy to any age which Sir Cornewall Lewis may allow him to attain—without letting him be in love at all. But if you shut him up for a week without putting something into his stomach, you will find him at the end of it as dead as a door-nail."

Here the singer, who had gradually retreated before the energetic advance of the orator, sank into the seat by the elm-tree, and said, pathetically, "Sir, you have fairly argued me down. Will you please to come to the conclusion which you deduce from your premises?"

"Simply this, that where you find one human being who cares about love, you will find a thousand susceptible to the charms of a dinner; and if you wish to be the popular minnesinger or troubador of the age, appeal to nature, sir—appeal to nature; drop all hackneyed rhapsodies about a rosy cheek, and strike your lyre to the theme of a beef-steak."

The dog had for some minutes regained his master's side, standing on his hind-legs, with the tray, tolerably well filled with copper coins, between his teeth; and now, justly aggrieved by the inattention which detained him in that artificial attitude, dropped the tray and growled at Kenelm.

At the same time there came an impatient sound from the audience in the tea-garden. They wanted another song for their money.

The singer rose, obedient to the summons. "Excuse me, sir; but I am called upon to——"

"To sing again?"

"Yes."

"And on the subject I suggest?"

"No, indeed."

"What! love, again?"

"I am afraid so."

"I wish you good evening then. You seem a well-educated man—more shame to you. Perhaps we may meet once more in our rambles, when the question can be properly argued out."

Kenelm lifted his hat, and turned on his heel. Before he reached the street, the sweet voice of the singer again smote his ears; but the only word distinguishable in the distance, ringing out at the close of the refrain, was "love."

"Fiddle-de-dee," said Kenelm.

CHAPTER VI.

As Kenelm regained the street dignified by the edifice of the Temperance Hotel, a figure, dressed picturesquely in a Spanish cloak, brushed hurriedly by him, but not so fast as to be unrecognized as the tragedian. "Hem!" muttered Kenelm—"I don't think there is much triumph in that face. I suspect he has been scolded."

The boy—if Kenelm's travelling companion is still to be so designated—was leaning against

the mantlepiece as Kenelm re-entered the dining-room. There was an air of profound dejection about the boy's listless attitude and in the drooping tearless eyes.

"My dear child," said Kenelm, in the softest tones of his plaintive voice, "do not honor me with any confidence that may be painful. But let me hope that you have dismissed for ever all thoughts of going on the stage."

"Yes," was the scarce audible answer.

"And now only remains the question, 'What is to be done?'"

"I am sure I don't know, and I don't care."

"Then you leave it to me to know and to care, and assuming for the moment as a fact, that which is one of the greatest lies in this mendacious world—namely, that all men are brothers, you will consider me as an elder brother, who will counsel and control you as he would—an imprudent young——sister. I see very well how it is. Somehow or other you, having first admired Mr. Compton as Romeo or Richard III., made his acquaintance as Mr. Compton. He allowed you to believe him a single man. In a romantic moment you escaped from your home, with the design of adopting the profession of the stage, and of becoming Mrs. Compton."

"Oh," broke out the girl, since her sex must now be declared—"oh," she exclaimed, with a passionate sob, "what a fool I have been! Only do not think worse of me than I deserve. The man did deceive me; he did not think I should take him at his word, and follow him here, or his wife would not have appeared. I should not have known he had one, and—and ——" here her voice was choked under her passion.

"But now you have discovered the truth, let us thank heaven that you are saved from shame and misery. I must despatch a telegram to your uncle—give me his address."

"No, no."

"There is not a 'No' possible in this case, my child. Your reputation and your future must be saved. Leave me to explain all to your uncle. He is your guardian. I must send for him; nay, nay, there is no option. Hate me now for enforcing your will, you will thank me hereafter. And listen, young lady; if it does pain you to see your uncle, and encounter his reproaches, every fault must undergo its punishment. A brave nature undergoes it cheerfully, as a part of atonement. You are brave. Submit, and in submitting rejoice!"

There was something in Kenelm's voice and manner at once so kindly and so commanding, that the wayward nature he addressed fairly succumbed. She gave him her uncle's address, "John Bovill, Esq., Oakdale, near Westmere." And after giving it, fixed her eyes mournfully upon her young adviser, and said with a simple, dreary pathos, "Now, will you esteem me more, or rather despise me less?"

She looked so young, nay, so childlike, as she thus spoke, that Kenelm felt a parental inclination to draw her on his lap and kiss away her tears. But he prudently conquered that impulse, and said, with a melancholy half-smile—

"If human beings despise each other for being young and foolish, the sooner we are exterminated by that superior race which is to succeed us on earth the better it will be. Adieu till your uncle comes."

"What! you leave me here—alone?"

"Nay, if your uncle found me under the same roof, now that I know that you are his niece, don't you think he would have a right to throw me out of the window? Allow me to practise for myself the prudence I preach to you. Send for the landlady to show you your room, shut yourself in there, go to bed, and don't cry more than you can help."

Kenelm shouldered the knapsack he had deposited in a corner of the room, inquired for the telegraph-office, despached a telegram to Mr. Bovill, obtained a bedroom at the Commercial Hotel, and fell asleep muttering these sensible words—

"Rochefoucauld was perfectly right when he said, 'Very few people would fall in love if they had not heard it so much talked about.'"

CHAPTER VII.

Kenelm Chillingly rose with the sun, according to his usual custom, and took his way to the Temperance Hotel. All in that sober building seemed still in the arms of Morpheus. He turned towards the stables in which he had left the grey cob, and had the pleasure to see

that ill-used animal in the healthful process of rubbing down.

"That's right," said he to the ostler, "I am glad to see you are so early a riser."

"Why," quoth the ostler, "the gentleman as owns the pony knocked me up at two o'clock in the morning, and pleased enough he was to see the creature again lying down in the clean straw."

"Oh, he has arrived at the hotel, I presume?—a stout gentleman?"

"Yes, stout enough; and a passionate gentleman too. Came in a yellow and two posters, knocked up the Temperance, and then knocked up me to see for the pony, and was much put out as he could not get any grog at the Temperance."

"I dare say he was. I wish he had got his grog; it might have put him in better humor. Poor little thing!" muttered Kenelm, turning away; "I am afraid she is in for a regular vituperation. My turn next, I suppose. But he must be a good fellow to have come at once for his niece in the dead of the night."

About nine o'clock Kenelm presented himself again at the Temperance Hotel, inquired for Mr. Bovill, and was shown by the prim maid-servant into the drawing-room, where he found Mr. Bovill seated amicably at breakfast with his niece, who, of course, was still in boy's clothing, having no other costume at hand, To Kenelm's great relief, Mr. Bovill rose from the table with a beaming countenance, and extending his hand to Kenelm, said—

"Sir, you are a gentleman; sit down, sit down and take breakfast."

Then, as soon as the maid was out of the room, the uncle continued—

"I have heard all your good conduct from this young simpleton. Things might have been worse, sir."

Kenelm bowed his head, and drew the loaf towards him in silence. Then, considering that some apology was due to his entertainer, he said—

"I hope you forgive me for that unfortunate mistake, when——"

"You knocked me down, or rather tripped me up. All right now. Elsie, give the gentleman a cup of tea. Pretty little rogue, is not she? and a good girl, in spite of her nonsense. It was all my fault letting her go to the play and be intimate with Miss Lockit, a stage-stricken, foolish old maid, who ought to have known better than lead her into all this trouble."

"No, uncle, cried the girl resolutely; "don't blame her, nor any one but me."

Kenelm turned his dark eyes approvingly towards the girl, and saw that her lips were firmly set; there was an expression, not of grief nor shame, but compressed resolution in her countenance. But when her eyes met his they fell softly, and a blush mantled over her cheeks up to her very forehead.

"Ah!" said the uncle, "just like you, Elsie; always ready to take everybody's fault on your own shoulders. Well, well, say no more about that.—Now, my young friend, what brings you across the country tramping it on foot, eh? a young man's whim?" As he spoke, he eyed Kenelm very closely, and his look was that of an intelligent man not unaccustomed to observe the faces of those he conversed with. In fact, a more shrewd man of business than Mr. Bovill is seldom met with on 'Change or in market.

"I travel on foot to please myself, sir," answered Kenelm, curtly, and unconsciously set on his guard.

"Of course you do," cried Mr. Bovill, with a jovial laugh. "But it seems you don't object to a chaise and pony whenever you can get them for nothing—ha, ha!—excuse me—a joke."

Herewith Mr. Bovill, still in excellent good humor, abruptly changed the conversation to general matters—agricultural prospects—chance of a good harvest—corn trade—money market in general—politics—state of the nation. Kenelm felt there was an attempt to draw him out, to sound, to pump him, and replied only by monosyllables, generally significant of ignorance on the questions broached; and at the close, if the philosophical heir of the Chillinglys was in the habit of allowing himself to be surprised he would certainly have been startled when Mr. Bovill rose, slapped him on the shoulder, and said in a tone of great satisfaction, "Just as I thought, sir; you know nothing of these matters—you are a gentleman born and bred—your clothes can't disguise you, sir. Elsie was right. My dear, just leave us for a a few minutes; I have something to say to our young friend. You can get ready meanwhile to go with me." Elsie left the table and walked obediently towards the doorway. There she

halted a moment, turned round and looked timidly towards Kenelm. He had naturally risen from his seat as she rose, and advanced some paces as if to open the door for her. Thus their looks encountered. He could not interpret that shy gaze of hers; it was tender it was deprecating, it was humble, it was pleading; a man accustomed to female conquests might have thought it was something more, something in which was the key to all. But that something more was an unknown tongue to Kenelm Chillingly.

When the two men were alone, Mr. Bovill reseated himself and motioned to Kenelm to do the same. "Now, young sir," said the former, "you and I can talk at our ease. That adventure of yours yesterday may be the luckiest thing that could happen to you."

"It is sufficiently lucky if I have been of any service to your niece. But her own good sense would have been her safeguard if she had been alone, and discovered, as she would have done, that Mr. Compton had, knowingly or not, misled her to believe that he was a single man."

"Hang Mr. Compton! we have done with him. I am a plain man, and I come to the point. It is you who have carried off my niece; it is with you that she came to this hotel. Now when Elsie told me how well you had behaved, and that your language and manners were those of a real gentleman, my mind was made up. I guess pretty well what you are; you are a gentleman's son—probably a college youth—not overburdened with cash—had a quarrell with your governor, and he keeps you short. Don't interrupt me. Well, Elsie is a good girl and a pretty girl, and will make a good wife, as wives go; and, hark ye, she has £20,000. So just confide in me—and if you don't like your parents to know about it till the thing's down, and they be only got to forgive and bless you, why, you shall marry Elsie before you can say Jack Robinson."

For the first time in his life Kenelm Chillingly was seized with terror—terror and consternation.—His jaw dropped—his tongue was palsied. If hair ever stands on end, his hair did. At last, with superhuman effort, he gasped out the word, "Mary!"

Yes—marry if you are a gentleman you are bound to it. You have compromised my niece—a respectable virtuous girl, sir—an orphan, but not unprotected. I repeat, it is you who have plucked her from my very arms and with violence and assault; eloped with her; and what would the world say if it knew? Would it believe in your prudent conduct?—conduct only to be explained by the resepect you felt due to your future wife. And where will you find a better? Where will you find an uncle who will part with his ward and £20,000 without asking if you have a sixpence? and the girl has taken a fancy to you—I see it; would she have given up that player so easily if you had not stolen her heart? Would you break that heart? No, young man—you are not a villain. Shake hands on it!"

"Mr. Bovill," said Kenelm, recovering his wonted equanimity, "I am inexpressibly flattered by the honor you propose to me, and I do not deny that Miss Elsie is worthy of a much better man than myself. But I have inconceivable prejudicies against the connubial state. If it be permitted to a member of the Established Church to cavil at any sentence written by St. Paul—and I think that liberty may be permitted to a simple layman, since eminent members of the clergy criticize the holy Bible as freely as if it were the history of Queen Elizabeth by Mr. Froude—I should demur at the doctrine that it is better to marry than to burn; I myself should prefer burning, With these sentiments it would ill become anyone entitled to that distinction of 'gentleman' which you confer on me to lead a fellow-victim to the sacrificial altar. As for any reproach attached to Miss Elsie, since in my telegram I directed you to ask for a young gentlman at this hotel, her very sex is not known in this place unless you divulge it. And——"

Here Kenelm was interrupted by a violent explosion of rage from the uncle. He stamped his feet; he almost foamed at the mouth; he doubled his fist, and shook it in Kenelm's face.

"Sir, you are mocking me: John Bovill is not a man to be jeered in this way. You *shall* marry the girl. I'll not have her thrust back upon me to be the plague of my life with her whims and tantrums. You have taken her, and you shall keep her, or I'll break every bone in your skin."

"Break them," said Kenelm, resignedly, but

at the same time falling back into a formidable attitude of defence, which cooled the pugnacity of his accuser. Mr. Bovill sank into his chair, and wiped his forehead. Kenelm craftily pursued the advantage he had gained, and in mild accents proceeded to reason—

"When you recover your habitual serenity of humor, Mr. Bovill, you will see how much your very excusable desire to secure your niece's happiness, and, I may add, to reward what you allow to have been forbearing and well-bred conduct on my part, has hurried you into an error of judgment. You know nothing of me. I may be, for what you know, an imposter or swindler; I may have every bad quality, and yet you are to be contented with my assurance, or rather your own assumption, that I am born a gentleman, in order to give me your niece and her £20,000. This is temporary insanity on your part. Allow me to leave you to recover from your excitement."

"Stop, sir," said Mr. Bovill, in a changed and sullen tone; "I am not quite the madman you think me. But I daresay I have been too hasty and too rough. Nevertheless the facts are as I have stated them, and I do not see how, as a man of honor, you can get off marrying my niece. The mistake you made in running away with her was, no doubt, innocent on your part; but still there it is; and supposing the case came before a jury, it would be an ugly one for you and your family. Marriage alone could mend it. Come, come, I own I was too business-like in rushing to the point at once, and I no longer say, 'Marry my niece off-hand.' You have only seen her disguised and in a false position. Pay me a visit at Oakdale—stay with me a month—and if at the end of that time you do not like her well enough to propose, I'll let you off and say no more about it."

While Mr. Bovill thus spoke, and Kenelm listened, neither saw that the door had been noiselessly opened, and that Elsie stood at the threshold. Now, before Kenelm could reply, she advanced into the middle of the room, and, her small figure drawn up to its fullest height, her cheeks glowing, her lips quivering, exclaimed—

"Uncle, for shame!" Then, addressing Kenelm in a sharp tone of anguish, "Oh, do not believe I knew anything of this!" she covered her face with both hands, and stood mute.

"All of chivalry that Kenelm had received with his baptismal appellation was aroused. He sprang up, and, bending his knee as he drew one of her hands into his own, he said—

"I am as convinced that your uncle's words are abhorrent to you as I am that you are a pure-hearted and high-spirited woman, of whose friendship I shall be proud. We meet again." Then releasing her hand, he addressed Mr. Bovill: "Sir, you are unworthy the charge of your niece. Had you not been so, she would have committed no imprudence. If she have any female relation, to that relation transfer your charge."

"I have! I have!" cried Elsie; "my lost mother's sister—let me go to her."

"The woman who keeps a school!" said Mr. Bovill, sneeringly.

"Why not?" asked Kenelm.

"She never would go there. I proposed it to her a year ago. The minx would not go into a school."

"I will now, uncle."

"Well, then, you shall at once; and I hope you'll be put on bread and water. Fool! fool! you have spoilt your own game. Mr. Chillingly, now that Miss Elsie has turned her back on herself, I can convince you that I am not the madman you thought me. I was at the festive meeting held when you came of age—my brother is one of your father's tenants. I did not recognize your face immediately in the excitement of our encounter and in your change of dress; but in walking home it struck me that I had seen it before, and I knew it at once when you entered the room to-day. It has been a tussle between us which should beat the other. You have beat me; and thanks to that idiot! If she had not put her spoke into my wheel, she would have lived to be 'my lady.' Now, good-day, sir."

"Mr. Bovill, you offered to shake hands: shake hands now, and promise me, with the good faith of one honorable combatant to another that Miss Elsie shall go to her aunt the school-mistress at once if she wishes it. Hark ye, my friend" (this in Mr. Bovill's ear): "A man can never manage a woman Till a woman marries, a prudent man leaves her to women; when she does marry, she manages her husband, and there's an end of it."

Kenelm was gone.

"Oh, wise young man!" murmured the

uncle. "Elsie, dear, how can we go to your aunt's while you are in that dress?"

Elsie started as from a trance, her eyes directed towards the doorway through which Kenelm had vanished. "This dress," she said, contemptuously—"this dress—is not that easily altered with shops in the town?"

"Gad!" muttered Mr. Bovil, "that youngster is a second Solomon; and if I can't manage Elsie, she'll manage a husband—whenever she gets one."

CHAPTER VIII.

"By the powers that guard innocence and celibacy," soliloquized Kenelm Chillingly, "but I have had a narrow escape! and had that amphibious creature been in girl's clothes instead of boy's, when she intervened like the deity of the ancient drama, I might have plunged my armorial Fishes into hot water. Though, indeed, it is hard to suppose that a young lady head-over-ears in love with Mr. Compton yesterday could have consigned her affections to me to-day. Still she looked as if she could, which proves either that one is never to trust a woman's heart, or never to trust a woman's looks. Decimus Roach is right. Man must never relax his flight from the women, if he strives to achieve an 'Approach to the Angels.'"

These reflections were made by Kenelm Chillingly as, having turned his back upon the town in which such temptations and trials had befallen him, he took his solitary way along a footpath that wound through meads and cornfields, and shortened by three miles the distance to a cathedral town at which he proposed to rest for the night.

He had travelled for some hours, and the sun was beginning to slope towards a range of blue hills in the west, when he came to the margin of a fresh rivulet, overshadowed by feathery willows, and the quivering leaves of silvery Italian poplars. Tempted by the quiet and cool of this pleasant spot, he flung himself down on the banks, drew from his knapsack some crusts of bread with which he had wisely provided himself, and, dipping them into the pure lymph as it rippled over its pebbly bed, enjoyed one of those luxurious repasts for which epicures would exchange their banquets in return for the appetite of youth. Then, reclined along the bank, and crushing the wild thyme which grows best and sweetest in wooded coverts, provided they be neighbored by water, no matter whether in pool or rill, he resigned himself to that intermediate state between thought and dreamland which we call 'reverie.' At a little distance he heard the low still sound of the mower's scythe, and the air came to his brow sweet with the fragrance of new-mown hay.

He was roused by a gentle tap on the shoulder, and turning lazily round, saw a good-humored jovial face upon a pair of massive shoulders, and heard a hearty and winning voice say—

"Young man, if you are not too tired, will you lend a hand to get in my hay? We are very short of hands, and I am afraid we shall have rain pretty soon."

Kenelm rose and shook himself, gravely contemplated the stranger, and replied in his customary sententious fashion, "Man is born to help his fellow-man—especially to get in hay while the sun shines. I am at your service."

"That's a good fellow, and I'm greatly obliged to you. You see I had counted on a gang of roving haymakers, but they were bought up by another farmer. This way,"—and leading on through a gap in the brushwood, he emerged, followed by Kenelm, into a large meadow, one-third of which was still under the scythe, the rest being occupied with persons of both sexes, tossing and spreading the cut grass. Among the latter, Kenelm, stripped to his shirt-sleeves, soon found himself tossing and spreading like the rest, with his usual melancholy resignation of mien and aspect. Though a little awkward at first in the use of his unfamiliar implements, his practice in all athletic accomplishments bestowed on him that invaluable quality which is termed 'handiness,' and he soon distinguished himself by the superior activity and neatness with which he performed his work. Something—it might be in his countenance or in the charm of his being a stranger—attracted the attention of the feminine section of haymakers, and one very pretty girl, who was nearer to him than the rest, attempted to commence conversation.

"This is new to you," she said, smiling.

"Nothing is new to me," answered Kenelm, mournfully. "But allow me to observe, that to do things well you should only do one thing at a time. I am here to make hay, and not conversation."

"My!" said the girl, in amazed ejaculation, and turned off with a toss of her pretty head.

"I wonder if that jade has got an uncle," thought Kenelm.

The farmer, who took his share of work with the men, halting now and then to look round, noticed Kenelm's vigorous application with much approval, and at the close of the day's work shook him heartily by the hand, leaving a two-shilling piece in his palm. The heir of the Chillingys gazed on that honorarium, and turned it over with the finger and thumb of the left hand.

"Ben't it eno'?" said the farmer, nettled.

"Pardon me," answered Kenelm. "But to tell you the truth, it is the first money I ever earned by my own bodily labor; and I regard it with equal curiosity and respect. But, if it would not offend you, I would rather that, instead of the money, you had offered me some supper; for I have tasted nothing but bread and water since the morning."

"You shall have the money and supper both, my lad," said the farmer, cheerily. "And if you will stay and help till I have got in the hay, I dare say my good woman can find you a better bed than you'll get at the village inn—if, indeed, you can get one there at all."

"You are very kind. But before I accept your hospitality excuse one question—have you any nieces about you?"

"Nieces!" echoed the farmer, mechanically thrusting his hands into his breeches-pockets, as if in search of something there—"nieces about me! what do you mean? Be that a new-fangled word for coppers?"

"Not for coppers, though perhaps for brass. But I spoke without metaphor. I object to nieces upon abstract principle, confirmed by the test of experience."

The farmer stared, and thought his new friend not quite so souud in his mental as he evidently was in his physical conformation, but replied, with a laugh, "Make yourself easy, then. I have only one niece, and she is married to an ironmonger and lives in Exeter."

On entering the farmhouse, Kenelm's host conducted him straight into the kitchen, and cried out, in a hearty voice, to a comely middle-aged dame, who, with a stout girl, was intent on culinary operations, "Hulloa! old woman, I have brought you a guest who has well earned his supper, for he has done the work of two, and I have promised him a bed."

The farmer's wife turned sharply around. "He is heartily welcome to supper. As to a bed," she said, doubtfully, "I don't know." But here her eyes settled on Kenelm; and there was something in his aspect so unlike what she expected to see in an itinerant hay-maker, that she involuntarily dropped a curtsey, and resumed, with a change of tone, "The gentleman shall have the guest-room; but it will take a little time to get ready—you know, John, all the furniture is covered up."

"Well wife, there will be leisure eno' for that. He don't want to go to roost till he has supped."

"Certainly not," said Kenelm, sniffing a very agreeable odor.

"Where are the girls?" asked the farmer.

"They have been in these five minutes, and gone up-stairs to tidy themselves."

"What girls?" faltered Kenelm, retreating towards the door. "I thought you said you had no nieces."

"But I did not say I had no daughters. Why, you are not afraid of them, are you?"

"Sir," replied Kenelm, with a polite and politic evasion of that question, "if your daughters are like their mother, you can't say that they are not dangerous."

"Come," cried the farmer, looking very much pleased, while his dame smiled and blushed—"come, that's as nicely said as if you were canvassing the county. 'Tis not among hay-makers that you learned manners, I guess; and perhaps I have been making too free with my betters."

"What!" quoth the courteous Kenelm, "do you mean to imply that you were too free with your shillings? Apologize for that, if you like, but I don't think you'll get back the shillings. I have not seen so much of this life as you have, but, according to my experience, when a man once parts with his money, whether to his betters or his worsers, the chances are that he'll never see it again."

At this aphorism the farmer laughed ready to kill himself, his wife chuckled, and even the

maid-of-all-work grinned. Kenelm, preserving his unalterable gravity, said to himself—

"Wit consists in the epigrammatic expression of a common place truth, and the dullest remark on the worth of money is almost as sure of successful appreciation as the the dullest remark on the worthlessness of women. Certainly I am a wit without knowing it."

Here the farmer touched him on the shoulder—touched it, did not slap it, as he would have done ten minutes before—and said—

"We must not disturb the Missis or we shall get no supper. I'll just go and give a look into the cow-sheds. Do you know much about cows?"

"Yes, cows produce cream and butter. The best cows are those which produce at the least cost the best cream and butter. But how the best cream and butter can be produced at a price which will place them free of expense on a poor man's breakfast-table, is a question to be settled by a Reformed Parliament and a Liberal Administration. In the meanwhile let us not delay the supper."

The farmer and his guest quitted the kitchen and entered the farmyard.

"You are quite a stranger in these parts?"

"Quite."

"You don't even know my name?"

"No, except that I heard your wife call you John."

"My name is John Saunderson."

"Ah! you come from the north, then? That's why you are so sensible and shrewd. Names that end in 'son' are chiefly borne by the descendants of the Danes, to whom King Alfred, Heaven bless him, peacefully assigned no less than sixteen English counties. And when a Dane was called somebody's son, it is a sign that he was the son of a somebody."

"By gosh! I never heard that before."

"If I thought you had I should not have said it."

"Now I have told you my name, what is yours?"

"A wise man asks questions and a fool answers them. Suppose for a moment that I am not a fool."

Famer Saunderson scratched his head, and looked more puzzled than became the descendant of a Dane settled by King Alfred in the north of England.

"Dash it," said he at last, "but I think you are Yorkshire too.'

"Man, who is the most conceited of all animals, says that he alone has the prerogative of thought, and condemns the other animals to the meaner mechanical operation which he calls instinct. But as instincts are unerring and thoughts generally go wrong, man has not much to boast of according to his own definition. When you say you think, and take it for granted, that I am Yorkshire, you err. I am not Yorkshire. Confining yourself to instinct, can you divine when we shall sup? The cows you are about to visit divine to a moment when they shall be fed."

Said the farmer, recovering his sense of superiority to the guest whom he obliged with a supper, "In ten minutes." Then, after a pause, and in a tone of depreciation, as if he feared he might be thought fine, he continued—"We don't sup in the kitchen. My father did, and so did I till I married; but my Bess, though she's as good a farmer's wife as ever wore shoe-leather, was a tradesman's daughter, and had been brought up different. You see she was not without a good bit of money; but even if she had been, I should not have liked her folks to say I had lowered her—so we sup in the parlor."

Quoth Kenelm, "The first consideration is to sup at all. Supper conceded, every man is more likely to get on in life who would rather sup in his parlor than his kitchen. Meanwhile, I see a pump; while you go to the cows I will stay here and wash my hands of them."

"Hold; you seem a sharp fellow, and certainly no fool. I have a son, a good smart chap, but stuck up; crows it over us all; thinks no small beer of himself. You'd do me a service, and him too, if you'd let him down a peg or two."

Kenelm, who was now hard at work at the pump-handle, only replied by a gracious nod. But as he seldom lost an opportunity for reflection, he said to himself, while he laved his face in the stream from the spout, "One can't wonder why every small man thinks it so pleasant to let down a big one, when a father asks a stranger to let down his own son for even fancying that he is not small beer. It is upon that principle in human nature that criticism wisely relinquishes its pretension as an analytical science, and becomes a lucrative profession.

It relies on the pleasure its readers find in letting a man down."

CHAPTER IX.

It was a pretty, quaint farmhouse, such as might go well with two or three hundred acres of tolerably good land, tolerably well farmed by an active, old-fashioned tenant, who, though he did not use mowing-machines nor steam-ploughs, nor dabble in chemical experiments, still brought an adequate capital to his land, and made the capital yield a very fair return of interest. The supper was laid out in a good-sized though low-pitched parlor with a glazed door, now wide open, as were all the latticed windows, looking into a small garden, rich in those straggling old English flowers which are now-a-days banished from gardens more pretentious and infinitely less fragrant. At one corner was an arbor covered with honeysuckle, and, opposite to it, a row of beehives. The room itself had an air of comfort, and that sort of elegance which indicates the presiding genius of feminine taste. There were shelves suspended to the wall by blue ribbons, and filled with small books neatly bound; there were flower-pots in all the window-sills; there was a small cottage piano; the walls were graced partly with engraved portraits of county magnates and prize oxen; partly with samples in worsted-work, comprizing verses of moral character and the names and birthdays of the farmer's grandmother, mother, wife, and daughters. Over the chimney-piece was a small mirror, and above that a trophy of a fox's brush; while niched into an angle in the room was a glazed cupboard, rich with specimens of old china, Indian and English.

The party consisted of the farmer, his wife, three buxom daughters, and a pale-faced slender lad of about twenty, the only son, who did not take willingly to farming: he had been educated at a superior grammar school, and had high notions about the March of Intellect and the Progress of the Age.

Kenelm, though among the gravest of mortals, was one of the least shy. In fact shyness is the usual symptom of a keen *amor propre;* and of that quality the youthful Chillingly scarcely possessed more than did the three Fishes of his hereditary scutcheon. He felt himself perfectly at home with his entertainers; taking care, however, that his attentions were so equally divided between the three daughters as to prevent all suspicious of a particular preference. "There is safely in numbers," thought he, "especially in odd numbers. The three Graces never married, neither did the nine Muses."

"I presume, young ladies, that you are fond of music," said Kenelm, glancing at the piano.

"Yes, I love it dearly," said the eldest girl, speaking for the others.

Quoth the farmer, as he heaped the stranger's plate with boiled beef and carrots, "Things are not what they were when I was a boy; then it was only great tenant-farmers who had their girls taught the piano, and sent their boys to a good school. Now we small folks are for helping our children a step or two higher than our own place on the ladder."

"The schoolmaster is abroad, said the son, with the emphasis of a sage adding an original aphorism to the stores of philosophy.

"There is, no doubt, a greater equality of culture than there was in the last generation," said Kenelm. "People of all ranks utter the same commonplace ideas in very much the same arrangements of syntax. And in proportion as the democracy of intelligence extends —a friend of mine, who is a doctor, tells me that complaints formerly reserved to what is called aristocracy (though what that word means in plain English I don't know) are equally shared by the commonalty—*tic-douloureux* and other neuralgic maladies abound. And the human race, in England at least, is becoming more slight and delicate. There is a fable of a man who, when he became exceedingly old, was turned into a grasshopper. England is very old, and is evidently approaching the grasshopper state of development. Perhaps we don't eat as much beef as our forefathers did. May I ask you for another slice?"

Kenelm's remarks were somewhat over the heads of his audience. But the son, taking them as a slur upon the enlightened spirit of the age, colored up and said, with a knitted brow, "I hope, sir, that you are not an enemy to progress."

"That depends: for instance, I prefer staying here, where I am well off, to going farther and faring worse."

"Well said!" cried the farmer.

Not deigning to notice that interruption, the son took up Kenelm's reply with a sneer, "I suppose you mean that it is to fare worse, if you march with the time."

"I am afraid we have no option but to march with the time; but when we reach that stage when to march to any farther is to march into old age, we should not be sorry if time would be kind enough to stand still; and all good doctors concur in advising us to do nothing to hurry him.

"There is no sign of old age in this country, sir; and thank Heaven we are not standing still!"

"Grasshoppers never do; they are always hopping and jumping, and making what they think 'progress,' till (unless they hop into the water and are swallowed up prematurely by a carp or a frog) they die of the exhaustion which hops and jumps unremitting naturally produce. May I ask you, Mrs. Saunderson, for some of that rice pudding?"

The farmer, who, though he did not quite comprehend Kenelm's metaphorical mode of arguing, saw delightedly that his wise son looked more posed than himself, cried with great glee, "Bob, my boy,—Bob! our visitor is a little too much for you!"

"Oh no," said Kenelm, modestly. "But I honestly think Mr. Bob would be a wiser man, and a weightier man, and more removed from the grasshopper state, if he would think less and eat more pudding."

When the supper was over the farmer offered Kenelm a clay pipe filled with shag, which that adventurer accepted with his habitual resignation to the ills of life; and the whole party, excepting Mrs. Saunderson, strolled into the garden. Kenelm and Mr. Saunderson seated themselves in the honeysuckle arbor: the girls and the advocate of progress stood without among the garden flowers. It was a still and lovely night, the moon at her full. The farmer, seated facing his hay-fields, smoked on placidly. Kenelm, at the third whiff, laid aside his pipe,and glanced furitively at the three Graces. They formed a pretty group, all clustered together near the silenced beehives, the two younger seated on the grass strip that bordered the flower-beds, their arms over each other's shoulders, the elder one standing behind them, with the moonlight shining soft on her auburn hair.

Young Saunderson walked restlessly by himself to and fro the path of gravel.

"It is a strange thing," ruminated Kenelm, "that girls are not unpleasant to look at if you can take them collectively—two or three bound up together; but if you detach any one of them from the bunch, the odds are that she is as plain as a pike-staff. I wonder whether that bucolical grasshopper, who is so enamoured of the hop and jump that he calls 'progress,' classes the society of the Mormons among the evidences of civilized advancement. There is a good deal to be said in favor of taking a whole lot of wives as one may buy a whole lot of cheap razors. For it is not impossible that out of a dozen a good one may be found. And then, too, a whole nosegay of variegated blooms, with a faded leaf here and there, must be more agreeable to the eye than the same monotonous solitary lady's smock. But I fear these reflections are naughty; let us change them. "Farmer," he said aloud, "I suppose your handsome daughters are too fine to assist you much. I did not see them among the haymakers.

"Oh, they were there, but by themselves, in the back part of the field. I did not want them to mix with all the girls, many of whom are strangers from other places. I don't know anything against them; but as I don't know anything for them, I thought it as well to keep my lasses apart."

"But I should have supposed it wiser to keep your son apart from them. I saw him in the thick of those nymphs."

"Well" said the farmer, musingly, and withdrawing his pipe from his lips, "I don't think lasses not quite well brought up, poor things! do as much harm to the lads as they can do to proper-behaved lasses—leastways my wife does not think so. 'Keep good girls from bad girls, says she, 'and good girls will never go wrong.' And you will find there is something in that when you have girls of your own to take care of."

"Without waiting for that time—which I trust may never occur—I can recognize the wisdom of your excellent wife's observation. My own opinion is, that a woman can more easily do mischief to her own sex than to ours, —since, of course, she cannot exist without doing mischief to somebody or other."

"And good, too," said the jovial farmer,

thumping his fist on the table. "What should we be without the women?"

"Very much better, I take it, sir. Adam was as good as gold, and never had a qualm of conscience or stomach till Eve seduced him into eating raw apples."

"Young man, thou'st been crossed in love. I see it now. That's why thou look'st so sorrowful."

"Sorrowful! Did you ever know a man crossed in love who looked less sorrowful when he came across a pudding?"

"Hey! but thou canst ply a good knife and fork—that I will say for thee." Here the farmer turned round, and gazed on Kenelm with deliberate scrutiny. That scrutiny accomplished, his voice took a somewhat more respectful tone, as he resumed, "Do you know that you puzzle me somewhat?"

"Very likely. I am sure that I puzzle myself. Say on."

"Looking at your dress and—and—"

"The two shillings you gave me? Yes——"

"I took you for the son of some small farmer like myself. But now I judge from your talk that you are a college chap—anyhow, a gentleman. Ben't it so?"

"My dear Mr. Sanderson, I set out on my travels, which is not long ago, with a strong dislike to telling lies. But I doubt if a man can get long through this world without finding that the faculty of lying was bestowed on him by nature as a necessary means of self-preservation. If you are going to ask me any questions about myself, I am sure that I shall tell you lies. Perhaps, therefore, it may be best for both if I decline the bed you proffered me, and take my night's rest under a hedge."

"Pooh! I don't want to know more of a man's affairs than he thinks fit to tell me. Stay and finish the haymaking. And I say, lad, I'm glad you don't seem to care for the girls; for I saw a very pretty one trying to flirt with you—and if you don't mind she'll bring you into trouble."

"How? Does she want to run away from her uncle?"

"Uncle! Bless you, she don't live with him! She lives with her father; and I never knew that she wants to run away. In fact, Jessie Wiles—that's her name—is, I believe, a very good girl, and everybody likes her—perhaps a little too much; but then she knows she's a beauty, and does not object to admiration."

"No woman ever does, whether she's a beauty or not. But I don't yet understand why Jessie Wiles should bring me into trouble."

"Because there is a big hulking fellow who has gone half out of his wits for her; and when he fancies he sees any other chap two sweet on her he thrashes him into a jelly. So, youngster, you just keep your skin out of that trap."

"Hem? And what does the girl say to those proofs of affection? Does she like the man the better for thrashing other admirers into jelly?"

"Poor child! No; she hates the very sight of him. But he swears she shall marry nobody else, if he hangs for it. And to tell you the truth, I suspect that if Jessie does seem to trifle with others a little too lightly, it is to draw away this bully's suspicion from the only man I think she does care for—a poor sickly young fellow who was crippled by an accident, and whom Tom Bowles could brain with his little finger."

"This is really interesting," cried Kenelm, showing something like excitement. "I should like to know this terrible suitor."

"That's easy eno'," said the farmer dryly. "You have only to take a stroll with Jessie Wiles after sunset, and you'll know more of Tom Bowles than you are likely to forget in a month."

"Thank you very much for your information," said Kenelm, in a soft tone, grateful but pensive. "I hope to profit by it."

"Do. I should be sorry if any harm came to thee; and Tom Bowles in one of his furies is as bad to cross as a mad bull. So now, as we must be up early, I'll just take a look round the stables, and then off to bed; and I advise you to do the same."

"Thank you for the hint. I see the young ladies have already gone in. Good night."

Passing through the garden, Kenelm encountered the junior Saunderson.

"I fear," said the Votary of Progress, "that you have found the governor awful slow. What have you been talking about?"

"Girls," said Kenelm, "a subject always awful, but not necessarily slow."

"Girls—the governor been talking about girls! You joke."

"I wish I did joke, but that is a thing I

could never do since I came upon earth. Even in the cradle, I felt that life was a very serious matter, and did not allow of jokes. I remember too well my first dose of castor-oil. You too, Mr. Bob, have doubtless imbibed that initiatory preparation to the sweets of existence. The corners of your mouth have not recovered from the downward curves into which it so rigidly dragged them. Like myself, you are of a grave temperament, and not easily moved to jocularity—nay, an enthusiast for Progress is of necessity a man eminently dissatisfied with the present state of affairs. And chronic dissatisfaction resents the momentary relief of a joke."

"Give off chaffing, if you please," said Bob, lowering the didascular intonations of his voice, "and just tell me plainly, did not my father say anything particular about me?"

"Not a word—the only person of 'the male sex of whom he said anything particular was Tom Bowles."

"What, fighting Tom! the terror of the whole neighborhood! Ah, I guess the old gentleman is afraid lest Tom may fall foul upon me. But Jessie Wiles is not worth a quarrel with that brute. It is a crying shame in the Government——"

"What! has the Government failed to appreciate the heroism of Tom Bowles, or rather to restrain the excesses of its ardor?"

"Stuff! it is a shame in the Government not to have compelled his father to put him to school. If education were universal——"

"You think there would be no brutes in particular. It may be so, but education is universal in China. And so is the bastinado. I thought, however, that you said the schoolmaster was abroad, and that the age of enlightenment was in full progress."

"Yes, in the towns, but not in these obsolete rural districts; and that brings me to the point. I feel lost—thrown away here. I have something in me, sir, and it can only come out by collision with equal minds. So do me a favor, will you?"

"With the greatest pleasure."

"Give the governor a hint that he can't expect me, after the education I have had, to follow the plough and fatten pigs; and that Manchester is the place for ME."

"Why Manchester?"

"Because I have a relation in business there who will give me a clerkship if the governor will consent. And Manchester rules England."

"Mr. Bob Saunderson, I will do my best to promote your wishes. This is a land of liberty, and every man should choose his own walk in it, so that, at the last, if he goes to the dogs, he goes to them without that disturbance of temper which is naturally occasioned by the sense of being driven to their jaws by another man against his own will. He has then no one to blame but himself. And that, Mr. Bob, is a great comfort. When, having got into a scrape, we blame others, we unconsciously become unjust, spiteful, uncharitable, malignant, perhaps revengeful. We indulge in feelings which tend to demoralize the whole character. But when we only blame ourselves, we become modest and penitent. We make allowances for others. And, indeed, self-blame is a salutary exercise of conscience which a really good man performs every day of his life. And now, will you show me the room in which I am to sleep, and forget for a few hours that I am alive at all—the best thing that can happen to us in this world, my dear Mr. Bob! There's never much amiss with our days, so long as we can forget all about them the moment we lay our heads on the pillow.

The two young men entered the house amicably, arm in arm. The girls had already retired, but Mrs. Saunderson was still up to conduct her visitor to the guest's chamber—a pretty room which had been furnished twenty-two years ago, on the occasion of the farmer's marriage, at the expense of Mrs. Saunderson's mother, for her own occupation whenever she paid them a visit. And with its dimity curtains and trellized paper it still looked as fresh and new as if decorated and furnished yesterday.

Left alone, Kenelm undressed, and before he got into bed, bared his right arm, and doubling it, gravely contemplated its muscular development, passing his left hand over that prominence in the upper part which is vulgarly called the ball. Satisfied apparently with the size and the firmness of that pugilistic protuberance, he gently sighed forth, "I fear I shall have to lick Thomas Bowles." In five minutes more he was asleep.

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CHAPTER X.

THE next day the hay-mowing was completed, and a large portion of the hay already made carted away to be stacked. Kenelm acquitted himself with a credit not less praiseworthy than had previously won Mr. Saunderson's approbation. But instead of rejecting as before the acquaintance of Miss Jessie Wiles, he contrived towards noon to place himself near to that dangerous beauty, and commenced conversation. "I am afraid I was rather rude to you yesterday, and I want to beg pardon."

"Oh," answered the girl, in that simple intelligible English which is more frequent among our village folks nowadays than many popular novelists would lead us into supposing—"oh, I ought to ask pardon for taking a liberty in speaking to you. But I thought you'd feel strange, and I intended it kindly."

"I'm sure you did," returned Kenelm, chivalrously raking her portion of hay as well as his own, while he spoke. "And I want to be good friends with you. It is very near the time when we shall leave off for dinner, and Mrs. Saunderson has filled my pockets with some excellent beef-sandwiches, which I shall be happy to share with you, if you do not object to dine with me here, instead of going home for your dinner."

The girl hesitated, and then shook her head in dissent from the proposition.

"Are you afraid that your neighbors will think it wrong?"

Jessie curled up her lip with a pretty scorn, and said, "I don't much care what other folks say, but isn't it wrong?"

"Not in the least. Let me make your mind easy. I am here but for a day or two: we are not likely ever to meet again; but, before I go, I should be glad if I could do you some little service." As he spoke he had paused from his work, and, leaning on his rake, fixed his eyes, for the first time attentively, on the fair haymaker.

Yes, she was decidedly pretty—pretty to a rare degree—luxuriant brown hair neatly tied up, under a straw hat doubtless of her own plaiting; for, as a general rule, nothing more educates the village maid for the destinies of flirt, than the accomplishment of straw-plaiting. She had large, soft blue eyes, delicate small features, and a complexion more clear in its healthful bloom than rural beauties generally retain against the influences of wind and sun. She smiled and slightly colored as he gazed on her, and, lifting her eyes, gave him one gentle, trustful glance, which might have bewitched a philosopher and deceived a *roué*. And yet Kenelm, by that intuitive knowledge of character which is often truthfulest where it is least disturbed by the doubts and cavils of acquired knowledge, felt at once that in that girl's mind coquetry, perhaps unconscious, was conjoined with an innocence of anything worse than coquetry as complete as a child's. He bowed his head, in withdrawing his gaze, and took her into his heart as tenderly as if she had been a child appealing to it for protection.

"Certainly," he said inly—"certainly I must lick Tom Bowles; yet stay, perhaps after all she likes him."

"But," he continued aloud, "you do not see how I can be of any service to you. Before I explain, let me ask which of the men in the field is Tom Bowles?"

"Tom Bowles!" exclaimed Jessie, in a tone of surprise and alarm, and turning pale as she looked hastily round; "you frightened me, sir, but he is not here; he does not work in the fields. But how came you to hear of Tom Bowles?"

"Dine with me and I'll tell you. Look, there is a quiet place in yon corner under the thorn-trees by that piece of water. See, they are leaving off work: I will go for a can of beer, and then, pray, let me join you there."

Jessie paused for a moment as if doubtful still; then again glancing at Kenelm, and assured by the grave kindness of his countenance, uttered a scarce audible assent, and moved away towards the thorn-trees.

As the sun now stood perpendicularly over their heads, and the hand of the clock in the village church tower, soaring over the hedgerows, reached the first hour after noon, all work ceased in a sudden silence; some of the girls went back to their homes; those who stayed grouped together, apart from the men, who took their way to the shadows of a large oak-tree in the hedgerow, where beer kegs and cans awaited them.

CHAPTER XI.

"And now," said Kenelm, as the two young persons, having finished their simple repast, sat under the thorn-trees and by the side of the water, fringed at that part with tall reeds through which the light summer breeze stirred with a pleasant murmur,—"now I will talk to you about Tom Bowles. Is it true that you don't like that brave young fellow?—I say young, as I take his youth for granted."

"Like him! I hate the sight of him."

"Did you always hate the sight of him? You must surely at one time have allowed him to think that you did not?"

The girl winced, and made no answer, but plucked a daffodil from the soil, and tore it ruthlessly to pieces.

"I am afraid you like to serve your admirers as you do that ill-fated flower," said Kenelm, with some severity of tone. "But concealed in the flower you may sometimes find the sting of a bee. I see by you, countenance that you did not tell Tom Bowles that you hated him till it was too late to prevent his losing his wits for you."

"No; I wasn't so bad as that," said Jessie, looking, nevertheless, rather ashamed of herself; "but I was silly and giddy-like, I own; and, when he first took notice of me, I was pleased, without thinking much of it, because, you see, Mr. Bowles (emphasis on *Mr.*) is higher up than a poor girl like me. He is a tradesman, and I am only a shepherd's daughter—though, indeed, father is more like Mr. Saunderson's foreman than a mere shepherd. But I never thought anything serious of it, and did not suppose he did—that is, at first."

"So Tom Bowles is a tradesman. What trade?"

"A farrier, sir."

"And, I am told, a very fine young man."

"I don't know as to that: he is very big."

"And what made you hate him?"

"The first thing that made me hate him was, that he insulted father, who is a very quiet, timid man, and threatened, I don't know what, if father did not make me keep company with him. Make me indeed! But Mr. Bowles is a dangerous, bad-hearted, violent man, and—don't laugh at me, sir—but I dreamed one night he was murdering me. And I think he will too, if he stays here; and so does his poor mother, who is a very nice woman, and wants him to go away; but he'll not."

"Jessie," said Kenelm, softly, "I said I wanted to make friends with you. Do you think you can make a friend of me? I can never be more than friend. But I should like to be that. Can you trust me as one?"

"Yes," answered the girl firmly, and as she lifted her eyes to him, their look was pure from all vestige of coquetry—guileless, frank, grateful.

"Is there not another young man who courts you more civilly than Tom Bowles does, and whom you really could find it in your heart to like?"

Jessie looked around for another daffodil, and not finding one, contented herself with a blue-bell, which she did not tear to pieces, but caressed with a tender hand. Kenelm bent his eyes down on her charming face with something in their gaze rarely seen there—something of that unreasoning, inexpressible human fondness, for which philosophers of his school have no excuse. Had ordinary mortals, like you or myself, for instance, peered through the leaves of the thorn-trees, we should have sighed or frowned, according to our several temperaments; but we should all have said, whether spitefully or envyingly, "Happy young lovers!" and should all have blundered lamentably in so saying.

Still, there is no denying the fact that a pretty face has a very unfair advantage over a plain one. And, much to the discredit of Kenelm's philanthropy, it may be reasonably doubted whether, had Jessie Wiles been endowed by nature with a snub nose and a squint, Kenelm would have volunteered his friendly services, or meditated battle with Tom Bowles on her behalf.

But there was no touch of envy or jealousy in the tone with which he said—

"I see there is some one you would like well enough to marry, and that you make a great difference in the way you treat a daffodil and a blue-bell. Who and what is the young man whom the blue-bell represents? Come, confide."

"We were much brought up together," said Jessie, still looking down, and still smoothing the leaves of the blue-bell. "His mother lived in the next cottage; and my mother was

very fond of him, and so was father too; and, before I was ten years old, they used to laugh when poor Will called me his little wife." Here the tears which had started to Jessie's eyes began to fall over the flower. "But now father would not hear of it; and it can't be. And I've tried to care for some one else, and I can't, and that's the truth."

"But why? Has he turned out ill?—taken to poaching or drink?"

"No—no—no,—he's as steady and good a lad as ever lived. But—but—"

"Yes; but——"

"He is a cripple now—and I love him all the better for it." Here Jessie fairly sobbed.

Kenelm was greatly moved, and prudently held his peace till she had a little recovered herself; then, in answer to his gentle questionings, he learned that Will Sommers—till then a healthy and strong lad—had fallen from the height of a scaffolding, at the age of sixteen, and been so seriously injured that he was moved at once to the hospital. When he came out of it—what with the fall, and what with the long illness which had followed the effects of the accident—he was not only crippled for life, but of health so delicate and weakly that he was no longer fit for outdoor labor and the hard life of a peasant. He was an only son of a widowed mother, and his sole mode of assisting her was a very precarious one. He had taught himself basket-making; and though, Jessie said, his work was very ingenious and clever, still there were but few customers for it in that neighborhood. And, alas! even if Jessie's father would consent to give his daughter to the poor cripple, how could the poor cripple earn enough to maintain a wife?

"And," said Jessie, "still I was happy, walking out with him on Sunday evenings, or going to sit with him and his mother—for we are both young and can wait. But I daren't do it any more now—for Tom Bowles has sworn that if I do he will beat him before my eyes; and Will has a high spirit, and I should break my heart if any harm happened to him on my account."

"As for Mr. Bowles, we'll not think of him at present. But if Will could maintain himself and you, your father would not object, nor you either, to a marriage with a poor cripple?"

"Father would not; and as for me, if it weren't for disobeying father, I'd marry him to-morrow. I can work."

"They are going back to the hay now; but after that task is over let me walk home with you, and show me Will's cottage and Mr. Bowles' shop or forge."

"But you'll not say anything to Mr. Bowles. He wouldn't mind your being a gentleman, as I now see you are, sir; and he's dangerous—oh, so dangerous!—and so strong."

"Never fear," answered Kenelm, with the nearest approach to a laugh he had ever made since childhood; "but when we are relieved, wait for me a few minutes at yon gate."

CHAPTER XII.

KENELM spoke no more to his new friend in the hayfields; but when the day's work was over he looked round for the farmer to make an excuse for not immediately joining the family supper. However, he did not see either Mr. Saunderson or his son. Both were busied in the stack-yard. Well pleased to escape excuse and the questions it might provoke, Kenelm therefore put on the coat he had laid aside and joined Jessie, who had waited for him at the gate. They entered the lane side by side, following the stream of villagers who were slowly wending their homeward way. It was a primitive English village, not adorned on the one hand with fancy or model cottages, nor on the other hand indicating penury and squalor. The church rose before them gray and Gothic, backed by the red clouds in which the sun had set, and bordered by the glebe-land of the half-seen parsonage. Then came the village green, with a pretty school-house; and to this succeeded a long street of scattered white-washed cottages, in the midst of their own little gardens.

As they walked the moon rose in full splendor, silvering the road before them.

"Who is the squire here?" asked Kenelm. "I should guess him to be a good sort of man and well off."

"Yes, Squire Travers; he is a great gentleman, and they say very rich. But his place is a good way from this village. You can see it if you stay, for he gives a harvest-home supper on Saturday, and Mr. Saunderson and all his tenants are going. It is a beautiful park, and

Miss Travers is a sight to look at. Oh, she is lovely!" continued Jessie, with an unaffected burst of admiration; for women are more sensible of the charm of each other's beauty than men give them credit for.

"As pretty as yourself?"

"Oh, pretty is not the word. She is a thousand times handsomer!"

"Humph!" said Kenelm, incredulously.

There was a pause, broken by a quick sigh from Jessie.

"What are you sighing for?—tell me."

"I was thinking that a very little can make folks happy, but that somehow or other that very little is as hard to get as if one set one's heart on a great deal."

"That's very wisely said. Everybody covets a little something for which, perhaps, nobody else would give a straw. But what's the very little thing for which you are sighing?"

"Mrs. Bawtrey wants to sell that shop of hers. She is getting old, and has had fits; and she can get nobody to buy; and if Will had that shop and I could keep it—but 'tis no use thinking of that."

"What shop do you mean?"

"There!"

"Where? I see no shop."

"But it is *the* shop of the village—the only one, where the post-office is."

"Ah! I see something at the windows like a red cloak. What do they sell?"

"Everything—tea and sugar, and candles and shawls, and gowns and cloaks, and mouse-traps, and letter-paper; and Mrs. Bawtrey buys poor Will's baskets, and sells them for a good deal more than she pays."

"It seems a nice cottage, with a field and orchard at the back."

"Yes. Mrs. Bawtrey pays £8 a year for it; but the shop can well afford it."

Kenelm made no reply. They both walked on in silence, and had now reached the centre of the village street when Jessie, looking up, uttered an abrupt exclamation, gave an affrighted start, and then came to a dead stop.

Kenelm's eye followed the direction of hers, and saw, a few yards distant, at the other side of the way, a small red brick house, with thatched sheds adjoining it, the whole standing in a wide yard, over the gate of which leaned a man smoking a small cutty-pipe. "It is Tom Bowles," whispered Jessie, and instinctively she twined her arm into Kenelm's—then, as if on second thoughts, withdrew it, and said, still in a whisper, "Go back now, sir—do."

"Not I. It is Tom Bowles whom I want to know. Hush!"

For here Tom Bowles had thrown down his pipe and was coming slowly across the road towards them.

Kenelm eyed him with attention. A singularly powerful man, not so tall as Kenelm by some inches, but still above the middle height, herculean shoulders and chest, the lower limbs not in equal proportion—a sort of slouching, shambling gait. As he advanced the moonlight fell on his face,—it was a handsome one. He wore no hat, and his hair, of a light brown, curled close. His face was fresh colored, with aquiline features; his age apparently about six or seven-and-twenty. Coming nearer and nearer, whatever favorable impression the first glance at his physiognomy might have made on Kenelm was dispelled, for the expression of his face changed and became fierce and lowering.

Kenelm was still walking on, Jessie by his side, when Bowles rudely thrust himself between them, and seizing the girl's arm with one hand, he turned his face full on Kenelm, with a menacing wave of the other hand, and said in a deep burly voice—

"Who be you?"

"Let go that young woman before I tell you."

"If you weren't a stranger," answered Bowles, seeming as if he tried to suppress a rising fit of wrath, "you'd be in the kennel for those words. But I s'pose you don't know that I'm Tom Bowles, and I don't choose the girl as I'm after to keep company with any other man. So you be off."

"And I don't choose any other man to lay violent hands on any girl walking by my side without telling him that he's a brute; and that I only wait till he has both his hands at liberty to let him know that he has not a poor cripple to deal with."

Tom Bowles could scarcely believe his ears. Amaze swallowed up for the moment every other sentiment. Mechanically he loosened his hold of Jessie, who fled off like a bird released. But evidently she thought of her new friend's danger more than her own escape; for instead of sheltering herself in her father's

cottage, she ran towards a group of laborers, who, near at hand, had stopped loitering before the public-house, and returned with those allies towards the spot in which she had left the two men. She was very popular with the villagers, who, strong in the sense of numbers, overcame their awe of Tom Bowles, and arrived at the place half running, half striding, in time, they hoped, to interpose between his terrible arm and the bones of the unoffending stranger.

Meanwhile Bowles, having recovered his first astonishment, and scarcely noticing Jessie's escape, still left his right arm extended towards the place she had vacated, and with a quick back-stroke of the left levelled at Kenelm's face, growled contemptuously, "Thou'lt find one hand enough for thee."

But quick as was his aim, Kenelm caught the lifted arm just above the elbow, causing the blow to waste itself on air, and with a simultaneous advance of his right knee and foot, dexterously tripped up his bulky antagonist, and laid him sprawling on his back. The movement was so sudden, and the stun it occasioned so utter, morally as well as physically, that a minute or more elapsed before Tom Bowles picked himself up. And he then stood another minute glowering at his antagonist, with a vague sentiment of awe almost like a superstitious panic. For it is noticeable that, however fierce and fearless a man or even a wild beast may be, yet if either has hitherto been only familiar with victory and triumph, never yet having met with a foe that could cope with its force, the first defect of a defeat, especially from a despised adversary, unhinges and half paralyzes the whole nervous system. But as fighting Tom gradually recovered to the consciousness of his own strength, and the recollection that it had only been foiled by the skilful trick of a wrestler, not the hand-to-hand might of a pugilist, the panic vanished, and Tom Bowles was himself again. "Oh, that's your sort, is it?" "We don't fight with our heels hereabouts, like Cornishers and donkeys; we fight with our fists, youngster; and since you *will* have a bout at that, why you must."

"Providence," answered Kenelm, solemnly, "sent me to this village for the express purpose of licking Tom Bowles. It is a signal mercy vouchsafed to yourself, as you will one day acknowledge."

Again a thrill of awe, something like that which the demagogue in Aristophanes might have felt when braved by the sausage-maker, shot through the valiant heart of Tom Bowles. He did not like those ominous words, and still less the lugubrious tone of voice in which they were uttered. But resolved, at least, to proceed to battle with more preparation than he had at first designed, he now deliberately disencumbered himself of his heavy fustian jacket and vest, rolled up his shirt-sleeves, and then slowly advanced towards the foe.

Kenelm had also, with still greater deliberation, taken off his coat—which he folded up with care, as being both a new and an only one, and deposited by the hedge-side—and bared arms, lean indeed, and appearing slight as compared with the vast muscle of his adversary, but firm in sinew as the hind-leg of a stag.

By this time the laborers, led by Jessie, had arrived at the spot, and were about to crowd in between the combatants, when Kenelm waved them back, and said in a calm and impressive voice—

"Stand round, my good friends, make a ring, and see that it is fair play on my side. I am sure it will be fair on Mr. Bowles's. He's big enough to scorn what is little. And now, Mr. Bowles, just a word with you in the presence of your neighbors. I am not going to say anything uncivil. If you are rather rough and hasty, a man is not always master of himself—at least so I am told—when he thinks more than he ought to do about a pretty girl. But I can't look at your face even by this moonlight, and though its expression at this moment is rather cross, without being sure that you are a fine fellow at bottom. And that if you give a promise as man to man you will keep it. Is that so?"

One or two of the bystanders murmured assent; the others pressed round in silent wonder.

"What's all that soft-sawder about?" said Tom Bowles, somewhat falteringly.

"Simply this: if in the fight between us I beat you, I ask you to promise before your neighbors that you will not by word or deed molest or interfere again with Miss Jessie Wiles."

"Eh?" roared Tom. "Is it that *you* are after her?"

"Suppose I am, if that pleases you; and, on my side, I promise that, if you beat me, I quit this place as soon as you leave me well enough to do so, and will never visit it again. What!

do you hesitate to promise? Are you really afraid I shall lick you?"

"You! I'd smash a dozen of you to powder."

"In that case you are safe to promise. Come, 'tis a fair bargain. Isn't it, neighbors?"

Won over by Kenelm's easy show of good temper, and by the sense of justice, the bystanders joined in a common exclamation of assent.

"Come, Tom," said an old fellow, "the gentleman can't speak fairer; and we shall all think you be afeard if you hold back."

Tom's face worked; but at last he growled, "Well, I promise—that is, if he beats me."

"All right," said Kenelm. "You hear, neighbors; and Tom Bowles could not show that handsome face of his among you if he broke his word. Shake hands on it."

Fighting Tom sulkily shook hands.

"Well, now that's what I call English," said Kenelm,—"all pluck and no malice. Fall back, friends, and leave a clear space for us."

The men all receded; and as Kenelm took his ground, there was a supple ease in his posture which at once brought out into clearer evidence the nervous strength of his build, and contrasted with Tom's bulk of chest, made the latter look clumsy and topheavy.

The two men faced each other a minute, the eyes of both vigilant and steadfast. Tom's blood began to fire up as he gazed—nor, with all his outward calm, was Kenelm insensible of that proud beat of the heart which is aroused by the fierce joy of combat. Tom struck out first, and a blow was parried, but not returned; another and another blow—still parried—still unreturned. Kenelm, acting evidently on the defensive, took all the advantages for that strategy which he derived from the superior length of arm and lighter agility of frame. Perhaps he wished to ascertain the extent of his adversary's skill, or to try the endurance of his wind, before he ventured on the hazards of attack. Tom, galled to the quick that blows which might have felled an ox were thus warded off from their mark, and dimly aware that he was encountering some mysterious skill which turned his brute strength into waste force, and might overmaster him in the long-run, came to a rapid conclusion that the sooner he brought that brute strength to bear, the better it would be for him. Accordingly, after three rounds, in which, without once breaking the guard of his antagonist, he had received a few playful taps on the nose and mouth, he drew back, and made a bull-like rush at his foe—bull-like, for it butted full at him with the powerful downbent head, and the two fists doing duty as horns. The rush spent, he found himself in the position of a man *milled*. I take it for granted that every Englishman, who can call himself a man—that is, every man who has been an English boy, and as such, been compelled to the use of his fists—knows what a 'mill' is. But I sing not only "pueris," but "virginibus." Ladies,—'a mill'—using, with reluctance and contempt for myself, that slang in which lady-writers indulge, and Girls of the Period know much better than they do their Murray—'a mill'—speaking not to lady-writers, not to Girls of the Period, but to innocent damsels, and in explanation to those foreigners who only understand the English language as taught by Addison and Macaulay—a 'mill,' periphrastically, means this: your adversary, in the noble encounter between fist and fist, has so plunged his head that it gets caught, as in a vice, between the side and doubled left arm of the adversary, exposing that head, unprotected and helpless, to be pounded out of recognizable shape by the right fist of the opponent. It is a situation in which raw superiority of force sometimes finds itself, and is seldom spared by disciplined superiority of skill. Kenelm, his right fist raised, paused for a moment, then loosening the left arm, releasing the prisoner, and giving him a friendly slap on the shoulder, he turned round to the spectators, and said, apologetically,—"He has a handsome face—it would be a shame to spoil it."

Tom's position of peril was so obvious to all, and that good-humored abnegation of the advantage which the position gave to the adversary seemed so generous, that the laborers actually hurrahed. Tom himself felt as if treated like a child; and alas, and alas for him! in wheeling round, and regathering himself up, his eye rested on Jessie's face. Her lips were apart with breathless terror; he fancied they were apart with a smile of contempt. And now he became formidable. He fought as fights the bull in presence of the heifer who, as he knows too well, will go with the conqueror.

If Tom had never yet fought with a man

taught by a prize-fighter, so never yet had Kenelm encountered a strength which, but for the lack of that teaching, would have conquered his own. He could act no longer on the defensive; he could no longer play, like a dexterous fencer, with the sledge-hammers of those mighty arms. They broke through his guard—they sounded on his chest as on an anvil. He felt that did they alight on his head he was a lost man. He felt also that the blows spent on the chest of his adversary were idle as the stroke of a cane on the hide of a rhinoceros. But now his nostrils dilated, his eyes flashed fire—Kenelm Chillingly had ceased to be a philosopher. Crash came his blow—how unlike the swinging round-about hits of Tom Bowles!—straight to its aim as the rifle ball of the Tyrolese, or a British marksman at Aldershot—all the strength of nerve, sinew, purpose, and mind concentred in its vigor,—crash just at that part of the front where the eyes meet, and followed up with the rapidity of lightning, flash upon flash, by a more restrained but more disabling blow with the left hand just where the left ear meets throat and jawbone.

At the first blow Tom Bowles had reeled and staggered, at the second he threw up his hands, made a jump in the air as if shot through the heart, and then heavily fell forwards, an inert mass.

The spectators pressed round him in terror. They thought he was dead. Kenelm knelt, and passed quickly his hand over Tom's lips, pulse, and heart, and then rising, said humbly, and with an air of apology—

"If he had been a less magnificent creature I assure you on my honor that I should never have ventured that second blow. The first would have done for any man less splendidly endowed by nature. Lift him gently; take him home. Tell his mother, with my kind regards, that I'll call and see her and him to-morrow. And, stop, does he ever drink too much beer?"

"Well," said one of the villagers, "Tom *can* drink."

"I thought so. Too much flesh for that muscle. Go for the nearest doctor. You, my iad?—good—off with you—quick! No danger, but perhaps it may be a case for the lancet."

Tom Bowles was lifted tenderly by four of the stoutest men present and borne into his home, evincing no sign of consciousness; but his face, where not clouted with blood, very pale, very calm, with a slight froth at the lips.

Kenelm pulled down his shirt-sleeves, put on his coat, and turned to Jessie—

"Now, my young friend, show me Will's cottage."

The girl came to him white and trembling. She did not dare to speak. The stranger had become a new man in her eyes. Perhaps he frightened her as much as Tom Bowles had done. But she quickened her pace, leaving the public-house behind, till she came to the further end of the village. Kenelm walked beside her, muttering to himself; and though Jessie caught his words, happily she did not understand, for they repeated one of those bitter reproaches on her sex as the main cause of all strife, bloodshed, and mischief in general, with which the classic authors abound. His spleen soothed by that recourse to the lessons of the ancients, Kenelm turned at last to his silent companion, and said, kindly but gravely—

"Mr. Bowles has given me his promise, and it is fair that I should now ask a promise from you. It is this—just consider how easily a girl so pretty as you can be the cause of a man's death. Had Bowles struck me where I struck him, I should have been past the help of a surgeon."

"Oh!" groaned Jessie, shuddering, and covering her face with both hands.

"And, putting aside that danger, consider that a man may be hit mortally on the heart as well as on the head, and that a woman has much to answer for who, no matter what her excuse, forgets what misery and what guilt can be inflicted by a word from her lip and a glance from her eye. Consider this, and promise that, whether you marry Will Somers or not, you will never again give a man fair cause to think you can like him unless your own heart tells you that you can. Will you promise that?"

"I will indeed—indeed." Poor Jessie's voice died in sobs.

"There, my child, I don't ask you not to cry, because I know how much women like crying, and in this instance it does you a great deal of good. But we are just at the end of the village; which is Will's cottage?"

Jessie lifted her head, and pointed to a solitary, small thatched cottage.

"I would ask you to come in and introduce

me; but that might look too much like crowing over poor Tom Bowles. So good night to you, Jessie, and forgive me for preaching."

CHAPTER XIII.

KENELM knocked at the cottage door; a voice said faintly, "Come in."

He stooped his head, and stepped over the threshold.

Since his encounter with Tom Bowles his sympathies had gone with that unfortunate lover—it is natural to like a man after you have beaten him; and he was by no means predisposed to favor Jessie's preference for a sickly cripple.

Yet, when two bright, soft, dark eyes, and a pale intellectual countenance, with that nameless aspect of refinement which delicate health so often gives, especially to the young, greeted his quiet gaze, his heart was at once won over to the side of the rival. Will Somers was seated by the hearth, on which a few live embers, despite the warmth of the summer evening, still burned; a rude little table was by his side, on which were laid osier twigs and white peeled chips, together with an open book. His hands, pale and slender, were at work on a small basket half finished. His mother was just clearing away the tea-things from another table that stood by the window. Will rose, with the good breeding that belongs to the rural peasant, as the stranger entered; the widow looked round with surprise, and dropped her simple courtesy—a little thin woman, with a mild patient face.

The cottage was very tidily kept, as it is in most village homes where the woman has it her own way. The deal dresser opposite the door had its display of humble crockery. The whitewashed walls were relieved with colored prints, chiefly Scriptural subjects from the New Testament, such as the Return of the Prodigal Son, in a blue coat and yellow inexpressibles, with his stockings about his heels.

At one corner there were piled up baskets of various sizes, and at another corner was an open cupboard containing books—an article of decorative furniture found in cottages much more rarely than colored prints and gleaming crockery.

All this, of course, Kenelm could not at a glance comprehend in detail. But as the mind of a man accustomed to generalization is marvellously quick in forming a sound judgment, whereas a mind accustomed to dwell only on detail is wonderfully slow at arriving at any judgment at all, and when it does, the probability is that it will arrive at a wrong one, Kenelm judged correctly when he came to this conclusion: "I am among simple English peasants; but, for some reason or other, not to be explained by the relative amount of wages, it is a favorable specimen of that class."

"I beg your pardon for intruding at this hour, Mrs. Somers," said Kenelm, who had been too familiar with peasants from his earliest childhood not to know how quickly, when in the presence of their household gods, they appeciate respect, and how acutely they feel the want of it. "But my stay in the village is very short, and I should not like to leave without seeing your son's basket work, of which I have heard much."

"You are very good, sir," said Will, with a pleased smile that wonderfully brightened up his face. "It is only just a few common things that I keep by me. Any finer sort of work I mostly do by order."

"You see, sir," said Mrs. Somers, "it takes so much more time for pretty work-baskets, and suchlike; and unless done to order, it might be a chance if he could get it sold. But pray be seated, sir," and Mrs. Somers placed a chair for her visitor, "while I just run upstairs for the work-basket which my son has made for Miss Travers. It is to go home to-morrow, and I put it away for fear of accidents."

Kenelm seated himself, and drawing his chair near to Will's, took up the half-finished basket which the young man had laid down on the table.

"This seems to me very nice and delicate workmanship," said Kenelm; "and the shape, when you have finished it, will be elegant enough to please the taste of a lady."

"It is for Mrs. Lethbridge," said Will; "she wanted something to hold cards and letters; and I took the shape from a book of drawings which Mr. Lethbridge kindly lent me. You know Mr. Lethbridge, sir? He is a very good gentleman."

"No, I don't know him. Who is he?"

"Our clergyman, sir. This is the book."

To Kenelm's surprise, it was a work on Pompeii, and contained woodcuts of the implements and ornaments, mosaics and frescoes, found in that memorable little city.

"I see, this is your model," said Kenelm; "what they call a *patera*, and rather a famous one. You are copying it much more truthfully than I should have supposed it possible to do in substituting basket-work for bronze. But you observe that much of the beauty of this shallow bowl depends on the two doves perched on the brim. You can't manage that ornamental addition."

"Mrs. Lethbridge thought of putting there two little stuffed canary-birds."

"Did she? Good heavens!" exclaimed Kenelm.

"But somehow," continued Will, "I did not like that, and I made bold to say so."

"Why did not you like it?"

"Well, I don't know; but I did not think it would be the right thing."

"It would have been very bad taste, and spoilt the effect of your basket-work; and I'll endeavor to explain why. You see here, in the next page, a drawing of a very beautiful statue. Of course this statue is intended to be a representation of nature—but nature idealized. You don't know the meaning of that hard word, idealized, and very few people do. But it means the performance of a something in art according to the idea which a man's mind forms to itself out of a something in nature. That something in nature must, of course, have been carefully studied before the man can work out anything in art by which it is faithfully represented. The artist, for instance, who made that statue, must have known the proportions of the human frame. He must have made studies of various parts of it—heads and hands, and arms and legs, and so forth—and having done so, he then puts together all his various studies of details, so as to form a new whole, which is intended to personate an idea formed in his own mind. Do you go with me?"

"Partly, sir; but I am puzzled a little still."

"Of course you are; but you'll puzzle yourself right if you think over what I say. Now, if in order to make this statue, which is composed of metal or stone, more natural, I stuck on it a wig of real hair, would not you feel at once that I had spoilt the work—that, as you clearly express it, 'it would not be the right thing?'—and, instead of making the work of art more natural, I should have made it laughably unnatural, by forcing insensibly upon the mind of him who looked at it the contrast between the real life, represented by a wig of actual hair, and the artistic life, represented by an idea embodied in stone or metal. The higher the work of art (that is, the higher the idea it represents as a new combination of details taken from nature), the more it is degraded or spoilt by an attempt to give it a kind of reality which is out of keeping with the materials employed. But the same rule applies to everything in art, however humble. And a couple of stuffed canary-birds at the brim of a basket-work imitation of a Greek drinking-cup, would be as bad taste as a wig from the barber's on the head of a marble statue of Apollo."

"I see," said Will, his head downcast, like a man pondering—"at least I think I see; and I'm very much obliged to you, sir."

Mrs. Somers had long since returned with the work-basket, but stood with it in her hands, not daring to interrupt the gentleman, and listening to his discourse with as much patience and as little comprehension as if it had been one of the controversial sermons upon Ritualism with which on great occasions Mr. Lethbridge favored his congregation.

Kenelm having now exhausted his critical lecture—from which certain poets and novelists, who contrive to caricature the ideal by their attempt to put wigs of real hair upon the heads of stone statues, might borrow a useful hint or two if they would condescend to do so, which is not likely—perceived Mrs. Somers standing by him, took from her the basket, which was really very pretty and elegant, subdivided into various compartments for the implements in use among ladies, and bestowed on it a well-merited eulogium.

"The young lady means to finish it herself with ribbons, and line it with satin," said Mrs. Somers proudly.

"The ribbons will not be amiss, sir?" said Will, interrogatively.

"Not at all. Your natural sense of the fitness of things tells you that ribbons go well with straw and light straw-work such as this; though you would not put ribbons on those rude hampers and game-baskets in the corner.

Like to like; a stout cord goes suitably with them; just as a poet who understands his art employs pretty expressions for poems intended to be pretty and suit a fashionable drawing-room, and carefully shuns them to substitute a simple cord for poems intended to be strong and travel far, despite of rough usage by the way. But you really ought to make much more money by this fancy-work than you could as a day-laborer."

Will sighed. "Not in this neighborhood, sir; I might in a town."

"Why not move to a town, then?"

The young man colored, and shook his head.

Kenelm turned appealingly to Mrs. Somers. "I'll be willing to go wherever it would be best for my boy, sir. But——" and here she checked herself, and a tear trickled silently down her cheeks.

Will resumed, in a more cheerful tone, "I am getting a little known now, and work will come if one waits for it."

Kenelm did not deem it courteous or discreet to intrude furthur on Will's confidence in the first interview; and he began to feel, more than he had done at first, not only the dull pain of the bruises he had received in the recent combat, but also somewhat more than the weariness which follows a long summer-day's work in the open air. He therefore, rather abruptly, now took his leave, saying that he should be very glad of a few specimens of Will's ingenuity and skill, and would call or write to give directions about them.

Just as he came in sight of Tom Bowles's house on his way back to Mr. Saunderson's, Kenelm saw a man mounting a pony that stood tied up at the gate, and exchanging a few words with a respectable-looking woman before he rode on. He was passing by Kenelm without notice, when that philosophical vagrant stopped him, saying, "If I am not mistaken, sir, you are the doctor. There is not much the matter with Mr. Bowles?"

The doctor shook his head. "I can't say yet. He has had a very ugly blow somewhere."

"It was just under the left ear. I did not aim at that exact spot; but Bowles unluckily swerved a little aside at the moment, perhaps in surprise at a tap between his eyes immediately preceding it: and so, as you say, it was an ugly blow that he received. But if it cures him of the habit of giving ugly blows to other people who can bear them less safely, perhaps it may be all for his good, as, no doubt, sir, your school-master said when he flogged you."

"Bless my soul! are you the man who fought with him—you? I can't believe it."

"Why not?"

"Why not! So far as I can judge by this light, though you are a tall fellow, Tom Bowles must be a much heavier weight than you are."

"Tom Spring was the champion of England; and according to the records of his weight, which history has preserved in her archives, Tom Spring was a lighter weight than I am."

"But are you a prize-fighter?"

"I am as much that as I am anything else. But to return to Mr. Bowles, was it necessary to bleed him?"

"Yes; he was unconscious, or nearly so, when I came. I took away a few ounces, and I am happy to say he is now sensible, but must be kept very quiet."

"No doubt; but I hope he will be well enough to see me to-morrow."

"I hope so too; but I can't say yet. Quarrel about a girl—eh?"

"It was not about money. And I suppose if there were no money and no women in the world, there would be no quarrels, and very few doctors. Good night, sir."

"It is a strange thing to me," said Kenelm, as he now opened the garden gate of Mr. Saunderson's homestead, "that though I've had nothing to eat all day, except a few pitiful sandwiches, I don't feel the least hungry. Such arrest of the lawful duties of the digestive organs never happened to me before. There must be something weird and ominous in it."

On entering the parlor, the family party, though they had long since finished supper, were still seated round the table. They all rose at sight of Kenelm. The fame of his achievements had preceded him. He checked the congratulations, the compliments, and the questions which the hearty farmer rapidly heaped upon him, with a melancholy exclamation, "But I have lost my appetite! No honors can compensate for that. Let me go to bed peaceably, and perhaps in the magic land of sleep Nature may restore me by a dream of supper."

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CHAPTER XIV.

KENELM rose betimes the next morning somewhat stiff and uneasy, but sufficiently recovered to feel ravenous. Fortunately one of the young ladies who attended specially to the dairy was already up, and supplied the starving hero with a vast bowl of bread and milk. He then strolled into the hay-field, in which there was now very little left to do, and but few hands besides his own were employed. Jessie was not there. Kenelm was glad of that. By nine o'clock his work was over, and the farmer and his men were in the yard completing the ricks. Kenelm stole away unobserved, bent on a round of visits. He called first at the village shop kept by Mrs. Bawtrey, which Jessie had pointed out to him, on pretence of buying a gaudy neckerchief; and soon, thanks to his habitual civility, made familiar acquaintance with the shop-woman. She was a little sickly old lady, her head shaking as with palsy, somewhat deaf, but still shrewd and sharp, rendered mechanically so by long habits of shrewdness and sharpness. She became very communicative, spoke freely of her desire to give up the shop, and pass the rest of her days with a sister, widowed like herself, in a neighboring town. Since she had lost her husband, the field and orchard attached to the shop had ceased to be profitable, and become a great care and trouble; and the attention the shop required was wearisome. But she had twelve years unexpired of the lease granted for twenty-one years to her husband on low terms, and she wanted a premium for its transfer, and a purchaser for the stock of the shop. Kenelm soon drew from her the amount of the sum she required for all—45*l.*

"You ben't thinking of it for yourself?" she asked, putting on her spectacles, and examining him with care.

"Perhaps so, if one could get a decent living out of it. Do you keep a book of your losses and gains?"

"In course, sir," she said, proudly. "I kept the book in my goodman's time, and he was one who could find out if there was a farthing wrong, for he had been in a lawyer's office when a lad."

"Why did he leave a lawyer's office to keep a little shop?"

"Well, he was born a farmer's son in this neighborhood, and he always had a hankering after the country, and—and besides that——"

"Yes."

"I'll tell you the truth; he had got into a way of drinking speerrits, and he was a good young man, and wanted to break himself of it, and he took the temperance oath: but it was too hard on him, for he could not break himself of the company that led him into liquor. And so, one time when he came into the neighborhood to see his parents for the Christmas holiday, he took a bit of liking to me; and my father, who was Squire Travers's bailiff, had just died, and left me a little money. And so, somehow or other, we came together, and got this house and the land from the Squire on lease very reasonable; and my goodman being well eddycated, and much thought of, and never being tempted to drink, now that he had a missis to keep him in order, had a many little things put into his way. He could help to measure timber, and knew about draining, and he got some book-keeping from the farmers about; and we kept cows and pigs and poultry, and so we did very well, specially as the Lord was merciful and sent us no children."

"And what does the shop bring in a year since your husband died?"

"You had best judge for yourself. Will you look at the book, and take a peep at the land and apple-trees? But they's been neglected since my goodman died."

In another minute the heir of the Chillinglys was seated in a neat little back parlor, with a pretty, though confined, view of the orchard and grass slope behind it, and bending over Mrs. Bawtrey's ledger.

Some customers for cheese and bacon coming now into the shop, the old woman left him to his studies. Though they were not of a nature familiar to him, he brought to them, at least, that general clearness of head and quick seizure of important points which are common to most men who have gone through some disciplined training of intellect, and been accustomed to extract the pith and marrow out of many books on many subjects. The result of his examination was satisfactory; there appeared to him a clear balance of gain from the shop alone of somewhat over 40*l.* a-year, taking the average of the last three years. Closing the book, he then let himself out of the window into the orchard, and thence into the neighbor-

ing grass field. Both were, indeed, much neglected; the trees wanted pruning, the field manure. But the soil was evidently of rich loam, and the fruit-trees were abundant and of ripe age, generally looking healthy in spite of neglect. With the quick intuition of a man born and bred in the country, and picking up scraps of rural knowledge unconsciously, Kenelm convinced himself that the land, properly managed, would far more than cover the rent, rates, tithes, and all incidental outgoings, leaving the profits of the shop as the clear income of the occupiers. And no doubt with clever young people to manage the shop, its profits might be increased.

Not thinking it necessary to return at present to Mrs. Bawtrey's, Kenelm now bent his way to Tom Bowles's.

The house-door was closed. At the summons of his knock it was quickly opened by a tall, stout, remarkably fine-looking woman, who might have told fifty years, and carried them off lightly on her ample shoulders. She was dressed very respectably in black, her brown hair braided simply under a neat tight-fitting cap. Her features were aquiline and very regular—altogether there was something about her majestic and Cornelia-like. She might have sat for the model of that Roman matron, except for the fairness of her Anglo-Saxon complexion.

"What's your pleasure?" she asked, in a cold and somewhat stern voice.

"Ma'm," answered Kenelm, uncovering, "I have called to see Mr. Bowles, and I sincerely hope he is well enough to let me do so."

"No, sir, he is not well enough for that; he is lying down in his own room, and must be kept quiet."

"May I then ask you the favor to let me in? I would say a few words to you who are his mother, if I mistake not."

Mrs. Bowles paused a moment as if in doubt; but she was at no less to detect in Kenelm's manner something superior to the fashion of his dress, and supposing the visit might refer to her son's professional business, she opened the door wider, drew aside to let him pass first, and when he stood midway in the parlor, requested him to take a seat, and to set him the example, seated herself.

"Ma'am," said Kenelm, "do not regret to have admitted me, and do not think hardly of me when I inform you that I am the unfortunate cause of your son's accident."

Mrs. Bowles rose with a start.

"You're the man who beat my boy?"

"No, ma'am, do not say I beat him. He is not beaten. He is so brave and so strong that he would easily have beaten me if I had not, by good luck, knocked him down before he had time to do so. Pray, ma'am, retain your seat and listen to me patiently for a few moments."

Mrs. Bowles, with an indignant heave of her Juno-like bosom, and with a superbly haughty expression of countenance, which suited well with its aquiline formation, tactily obeyed.

"You will allow, ma'am," recommenced Kenelm, "that this is not the first time by many that Mr. Bowles has come to blows with another man. Am I not right in that assumption?"

"My son is of a hasty temper," replied Mrs. Bowles, reluctantly, "and people should not aggravate him."

"You grant the fact, then?" said Kenelm, imperturbably, but with a polite inclination of head. "Mr. Bowles has often been engaged in these encounters, and in all of them it is quite clear that he provoked the battle; for you must be aware that he is not the sort of a man to whom any other would be disposed to give the first blow. Yet, after these little incidents had occurred, and Mr. Bowles had, say, half killed the person who aggravated him, you did not feel any resentment against that person, did you? Nay, if he had wanted nursing, you would have gone and nursed him."

"I don't know as to nursing," said Mrs. Bowles, beginning to lose her dignity of mien; "but certainly I should have been very sorry for him. And as for Tom—though I say it who should not say—he has no more malice than a baby—he'd go and make it up with any man, however badly he had beaten him."

"Just as I supposed; and if the man had sulked and would not make it up, Tom would have called him a bad fellow, and felt inclined to beat him again."

Mrs. Bowles's face relaxed into a stately smile.

"Well, then," pursued Kenelm, "I do but humbly imitate Mr. Bowles, and I come to make it up and shake hands with him."

"No, sir—no," exclaimed Mrs. Bowles, though in a low voice, and turning pale.

"Don't think of it. 'Tis not the blows—he'll get over those fast enough; 'tis his pride that's hurt; and if he saw you there might be mischief. But you're a stranger, and going away; —do go soon—do keep out of his way—do!" And the mother clasped her hands.

"Mrs. Bowles," said Kenelm, with a change of voice and aspect—a voice and aspect so earnest and impressive that they stilled and awed her—"will you not help me to save your son from the dangers into which that hasty temper and that mischievous pride may at any moment hurry him? Does it never occur to you that these are the causes of terrible crime, bringing terrible punishment; and that against brute force, impelled by savage passions, society protects itself by the hulks and the gallows?"

"Sir, how dare you——"

"Hush! If one man kill another in a moment of ungovernable wrath, that is a crime which, though heavily punished by the conscience, is gently dealt with by the law, which calls it only manslaughter; but if a motive to the violence—such as jealousy or revenge—can be assigned, and there should be no witness by to prove that the violence was not premeditated, then the law does not call it manslaughter, but murder. Was it not that thought which made you so imploringly exclaim, 'Go soon; keep out of his way?'"

The woman made no answer, but sinking back in her chair, gasped for breath.

"Nay, madam," resumed Kenelm, mildly; "banish your fears. If you will help me, I feel sure that I can save your son from such perils, and I only ask you to let me save him. I am convinced that he has a good and a noble nature, and he is worth saving." As he thus said he took her hand. She resigned it to him and returned the pressure, all her pride softening as she began to weep.

At length, when she recovered voice, she said—

"It is all along of that girl. He was not so till she crossed him, and made him half mad. He is not the same man since then—my poor Tom!"

"Do you know that he has given me his word, and before his fellow-villagers, that if he had the worst of the fight he would never molest Jessie Wiles again?"

"Yes, he told me so himself; and it is that which weighs on him now. He broods, and broods, and mutters, and will not be comforted; and—and I do fear that he means revenge. And again, I implore you keep out of his way."

"It is not revenge on me that he thinks of. Suppose I go and am seen no more, do you think in your own heart that that girl's life is safe?"

"What! My Tom kill a woman!"

"Do you never read in your newspaper of a man who kills his sweetheart, or the girl who refuses to be his sweetheart? At all events, you yourself do not approve this frantic suit of his. If I have heard rightly, you have wished to get Tom out of the village for some time, till Jessie Wiles is—we'll say, married, or gone elsewhere for good."

"Yes, indeed, I have wished and prayed for it many's the time, both for her sake and for his. And I am sure I don't know what we shall do if he stays, for he has been losing custom fast. The Squire has taken away his, and so have many of the farmers; and such a trade as it was in his good father's time! And if he would go, his uncle, the Veterinary at Luscombe, would take him into partnership; for he has no son of his own, and he knows how clever Tom is;—there ben't a man who knows more about horses; and cows, too, for the matter of that."

"And if Luscombe is a large place, the business there must be more profitable than it can be here, even if Tom got back his custom?"

"Oh yes! five times as good—if he would but go; but he'll not hear of it."

"Mrs. Bowles, I am very much obliged to you for your confidence, and I feel sure that all will end happily, now we have had this talk. I'll not press farther on you at present. Tom will not stir out, I suppose, till the evening."

"Ah, sir, he seems as if he had no heart to stir out again, unless for something dreadful."

"Courage! I will call again in the evening, and then you just take me up to Tom's room, and leave me there to make friends with him, as I have with you. Don't say a word about me in the meanwhile."

"But——"

"'But,' Mrs. Bowles, is a word that cools many a warm impulse, stifles many a kindly thought, puts a dead stop to many a brotherly deed. Nobody would ever love his neighbor as himself if he listened to all the Buts that could be said on the other side of the question.

CHAPTER XV.

Kenelm now bent his way towards the parsonage, but just as he neared its glebe lands he met a gentleman whose dress was so evidently clerical that he stopped and said—

"Have I the honor to address Mr. Lethbridge?"

"That is my name," said the clergyman, smiling pleasantly. "Anything I can do for you?"

"Yes, a great deal, if you will let me talk to you about a few of your parishioners."

"My parishioners! I beg your pardon, but you are quite a stranger to me, and, I should think, to the parish."

"To the parish—no, I am quite at home in it; and I honestly believe that it has never known a more officious busybody thrusting himself into its most private affairs."

Mr. Lethbridge stared, and, after a short pause, said—"I have heard of a young man who has been staying at Mr. Saunderson's, and is indeed at this moment the talk of the village. You are——"

"That young man. Alas! yes."

"Nay," said Mr. Lethbridge, kindly, "I cannot myself, as a minister of the Gospel, approve of your profession, and, if I might take the liberty, I would try and dissuade you from it; but still, as for the one act of freeing a poor girl from the most scandalous persecution, and administering, though in a rough way, a lesson to a savage brute who has long been the disgrace and terror of the neighborhood, I cannot honestly say that it has my condemnation. The moral sense of a community is generally a right one—you have won the praise of the village. Under all the circumstances, I do not withhold mine. You woke this morning and found yourself famous. Do not sigh 'Alas.'"

"Lord Byron woke one morning and found himself famous, and the result was that he sighed 'Alas' for the rest of his life. If there be two things which a wise man should avoid, they are fame and love. Heaven defend me from both!"

Again the person stared; but being of compassionate nature, and inclined to take mild views of everything that belongs to humanity, he said, with a slight inclination of his head—

"I have always heard that the Americans in general enjoy the advantage of a better education than we do in England, and their reading public is infinitely larger than ours; still, when I hear one of a calling not highly considered in this country for intellectual cultivation or ethical philosophy cite Lord Byron, and utter a sentiment at variance with the impetuosity of inexperienced youth, but which has much to commend it in the eyes of a reflective Christian impressed with the nothingness of the objects mostly coveted by the human heart, I am surprised, and—Oh, my dear young friend, surely your education might fit you for something better!"

It was among the maxims of Kenelm Chillingly's creed that a sensible man should never allow himself to be surprised; but here he was, to use a popular idiom, 'taken aback,' and lowered himself to the rank of ordinary minds by saying simply, "I don't understand."

"I see," resumed the clergyman, shaking his head gently, "as I always suspected, that in the vaunted education bestowed on Americans, the elementary principles of Christian right and wrong are more neglected than they are among our own humble classes. Yes, my young friend, you may quote poets, you may startle me by remarks on the nothingness of human fame and human love, derived from the precepts of heathen poets, and yet not understand with what compassion, and, in the judgment of most sober-minded persons, with what contempt, a human being who practises your vocation is regarded."

"Have I vocation?" said Kenelm. "I am very glad to hear it. What is my vocation? and why must I be an American?"

"Why—surely I am not misinformed. You are the American—I forget his name—who has come over to contest the belt of prize-fighting with the champion of England. You are silent; you hang your head. By your appearance, your length of limb, your gravity of countenance, your evident education, you confirm the impression of your birth. Your prowess has proved your profession."

"Reverend sir," said Kenelm, with his unutterable seriousness of aspect, "I am on my travels in search of truth and in flight from shams, but so great a take-in as myself I have not yet encountered. Remember me in your prayers. I am not an American; I am not a prize-fighter. I honor the first as the citizen of a grand republic trying his best to accom-

plish an experiment in government in which he will find the very prosperity he tends to create will sooner or later destroy his experiment. I honor the last because strength, courage, and sobriety are essential to the prize-fighter, and are among the chiefest ornaments of kings and heroes. But I am neither one nor the other. And all I can say for myself is, that I belong to that very vague class commonly called English gentlemen, and that, by birth and education, I have a right to ask you to shake hands with me as such."

Mr. Lethbridge stared again, raised his hat, bowed, and shook hands.

"You will allow me now to speak to you about your parishoners. You take an interest in Will Somers—so do I. He is clever and ingenious. But it seems there is not sufficient demand here for his baskets, and he would, no doubt, do better in some neighboring town. Why does he object to move?"

"I fear that poor Will would pine away to death if he lost sight of that pretty girl for whom you did such chivalrous battle with Tom Bowles."

"The unhappy man, then, is really in love with Jessie Wiles? And do you think she no less really cares for him?"

"I am sure of it."

"And would make him a good wife—that is, as wives go?"

"A good daughter generally makes a good wife. And there is not a father in the place who has a better child than Jessie is to hers. She really is a girl of a superior nature. She was the cleverest pupil at our school, and my wife is much attached to her. But she has something better than mere cleverness; she has an excellent heart."

"What you say confirms my own impressions. And the girl's father has no other objection to Will Somers than his fear that Will could not support a wife and family comfortably."

"He can have uo other objection save that which would apply equally to all suitors. I mean his fear lest Tom Bowles might do her some mischief, if he knew she was about to marry any one else."

"You think, then, that Mr. Bowles is a thoroughly bad and dangerous person?"

"Thoroughly bad and dangerous, and worse since he has taken to drinking."

"I suppose he did not take to drinking till he lost his wits for Jessie Wiles?"

"No, I don't think he did."

"But, Mr. Lethbridge, have you never used your influence over this dangerous man?"

"Of course, I did try, but I only got insulted. He is a godless animal, and has not been inside a church for years. He seems to have got a smattering of such vile learning as may be found in infidel publications, and I doubt if he has any religion at all."

"Poor Polyphemus! no wonder his Galatea shuns him."

"Old Wiles is terribly frightened, and asked my wife to find Jessie a place as servant at a distance. But Jessie can't bear the thoughts of leaving."

"For the same reason which attaches Will Somers to the native soil?"

"My wife thinks so."

"Do you believe that if Tom Bowles were out of the way, and Jessie and Will were man and wife, they could earn a sufficient livelihood as successors to Mrs. Bawtrey; Will adding the profits of his basket-work to those of the shop and land?"

"A sufficient livelihood! of course. They would be quite rich. I know the shop used to turn a great deal of money. The old woman, to be sure, is no longer up to business, but still she retains a good custom."

"Will Somers seems in delicate health. Perhaps if he had less weary struggle for a livelihood, and no fear of losing Jessie, his health would improve."

"His life would be saved, sir."

"Then," said Kenelm, with a heavy sigh and a face as long as an undertaker's, "though I myself entertain a profound compassion for that disturbance to our mental equilibrium which goes by the name of 'love,' and I am the last person who ought to add to the cares and sorrows which marriage entails upon its victims—I say nothing of the woes destined to those whom marriage usually adds to a population already overcrowded—I fear that I must be the means of bringing these two love-birds into the same cage. I am ready to purchase the shop and its appurtenances on their behalf, on the condition that you will kindly obtain the consent of Jessie's father to their union. As for my brave friend Tom Bowles, I undertake to deliver them and the village from that exuber-

ant nature, which requires a larger field for its energies. Pardon me for not letting you interrupt me. I have not yet finished what I have to say. Allow me to ask if Mrs. Grundy resides in this village."

"Mrs. Grundy! Oh, I understand. Of course; wherever a woman has a tongue, there Mrs. Grundy has a home."

"And seeing that Jessie is very pretty, and that in walking with her I encountered Mr. Bowles, might not Mrs. Grundy say, with a toss of her head—'that it was not out of pure charity that the stranger had been so liberal to Jessie Wiles.' But if the money for the shop be paid through you to Mrs. Bawtrey, and you kindly undertake all the contingent arrangements, Mrs. Grundy will have nothing to say against any one."

Mr. Lethbridge gazed with amaze at the solemn countenance before him.

"Sir," he said, after a long pause, "I scarcely know how to express my admiration of a generosity so noble, so thoughtful, and accompanied with a delicacy, and, indeed, with a wisdom, which—which——"

"Pray, my dear sir, do not make me still more ashamed of myself than I am at present, for an interference in love matters quite alien to my own convictions as to the best mode of making an 'Approach to the Angels.' To conclude this business, I think it better to deposit in your hands the sum of £45, for which Mrs. Bawtrey has agreed to sell the remainder of her lease and stock-in-hand; but, of course, you will not make anything public till I am gone, and Tom Bowles too. I hope I may get him away to-morrow; but I shall know to-night when I can depend on his departure—and till he goes I must stay."

As he spoke, Kenelm transferred from his pocket-book to Mr. Lethbridge's hand bank-notes to the amount specified.

"May I at least ask the name of the gentleman who honors me with his confidence, and has bestowed so much happiness on members of my flock?"

"There is no great reason why I should not tell you my name, but I see no reason why I should. You remember Talleyrand's advice—'If you are in doubt whether to write a letter or not—don't.' The advice applies to many doubts in life besides that of letter-writing. Farewell, sir!"

"A most extraordinay young man," muttered the parson, gazing at the receding form of the tall stranger; then gently shaking his head, he added, "Quite an original." He was contented with that solution of the difficulties which had puzzled him. May the reader be the same.

CHAPTER XVI.

After the family dinner, at which the farmer's guest displayed more than his usual powers of appetite, Kenelm followed his host towards the stackyard, and said—

"My dear Mr. Saunderson, though you have no longer any work for me to do, and I ought not to trespass farther on your hospitality; yet if I might stay with you another day or so, I should be very grateful."

"My dear lad," cried the farmer, in whose estimation Kenelm had risen prodigiously since the victory over Tom Bowles, "you are welcome to stay as long as you like, and we shall be all sorry when you go. Indeed, at all events, you must stay over Saturday, for you shall go with us to the Squire's harvest-supper. It will be a pretty sight, and my girls are already counting on you for a dance."

"Saturday—the day after to-morrow. You are very kind; but merry-makings are not much in my way, and I think I shall be on my road before you set off to the Squire's supper."

"Pooh! you shall stay; and, I say, young un, if you want more to do, I have a job for you quite in your line."

"What is it?"

"Thrash my ploughman. He has been insolent this morning, and he is the biggest fellow in the county, next to Tom Bowles."

Here the farmer laughed heartily, enjoying his own joke.

"Thank you for nothing," said Kenelm rubbing his bruises. "A burnt child dreads the fire."

The young man wandered alone into the fields. The day was becoming overcast, and the clouds threatened rain. The air was exceedingly still; the landscape, missing the sunshine, wore an aspect of gloomy solitude. Kenelm came to the banks of the rivulet not far from the spot on which the farmer had first

found him. There he sate down, and leant his cheek on his hand, with eyes fixed on the still and darkened stream lapsing mournfully away: sorrow entered into his heart and tinged its musings.

"Is it then true," said he, soliloquizing, "that I am born to pass through life utterly alone; asking, indeed, for no sister-half of myself, disbelieving its possibility, shrinking from the thought of it—half scorning, half pitying those who sigh for it?—thing unattainable—better sigh for the moon!

"Yet if other men sigh for it, why do I stand apart from them? If the world be a stage, and all the men and women in it merely players, am I to be the solitary spectator, with no part in the drama, and no interest in the vicissitudes of its plot? Many there are, no doubt, who covet as little as I do the part of 'Lover,' 'with a woeful ballad, made to his mistress' eyebrow;' but then they covet some other part in the drama, such as that of Soldier 'bearded as a pard,' or that of Justice 'in fair round belly with fat capon lined.' But me no ambition fires—I have no longing either to rise or to shine. I don't desire to be a colonel, nor an admiral, nor a member of Parliament, nor an alderman; I do not yearn for the fame of a wit, or a poet, or a philosopher, or a diner-out, or a crack shot at a rifle-match or a *battue*. Decidedly, I am the one looker-on, the one bystander, and have no more concern with the active world than a stone has. It is a horrible phantasmal crotchet of Goethe's, that originally we were all monads, little segregated atoms adrift in the atmosphere, and carried hither and thither by forces over which we had no control, especially by the attraction of other monads, so that one monad, compelled by porcine monads, crystallizes into a pig; another, hurried along by heroic monads, becomes a lion or an Alexander. Now it is quite clear," continued Kenelm, shifting his position and crossing the right leg over the left, "that a monad intended or fitted for some other planet may, on its way to that destination, be encountered by a current of other monads blowing earthward, and be caught up in the stream and whirled on, till, to the marring of its whole proper purpose and scene of action, it settles here—conglomerated into a baby. Probably that lot has befallen me: my monad, meant for another region in space, has been dropped into this, where it can never be at home, never amalgamate with other monads, nor comprehend why they are in such a perpetual fidget. I declare I know no more why the minds of human beings should be so restlessly agitated about things which, as most of them own, give more pain than pleasure, than I understand why that swarm of gnats, which has such a very short time to live, does not give itself a moment's repose, but goes up and down, rising and falling as if it were on a seesaw, and making as much noise about its insignificant alternations of ascent and descent, as if it were the hum of men. And yet, perhaps, in another planet my monad would have frisked, and jumped, and danced, and seesawed with congenial monads, as contentedly and as sillily as do the monads of men and gnats in this alien Vale of Tears."

Kenelm had just arrived at that conjectural solution of his perplexities when a voice was heard singing, or rather modulated to that kind of chant between recitative and song, which is so pleasingly effective where the intonations are pure and musical. They were so in this instance, and Kenelm's ear caught every word in the following song:—

CONTENT.

There are times when the troubles of life are still;
The bees wandered lost in the depths of June,
And I paused where the chime of a silver rill
Sang the linnet and lark to their rest at noon.

Said my soul—"See how calmly the wavelets glide,
Though so narrow their way to their ocean-vent:
And the world that I traverse is wide, is wide,
And yet is too narrow to hold content."

"O my soul, never say that the world is wide—
The rill in its banks is less closely pent;
It is thou who art shoreless on every side,
And thy width will not let thee enclose content."

As the verse ceased Kenelm lifted his head. But the banks of the brook were so curving and so clothed with brushwood, that for some minutes the singer was invisible. At last the boughs before him were put aside, and within a few paces of himself paused the man to whom he had commended the praises of a beefsteak, instead of those which minstrelsy, in its immemorial error, dedicates to love.

"Sir," said Kenelm, half rising, "well met once more. Have you ever listened to the cuckoo?"

"Sir," answered the minstrel, "have you ever felt the presence of the summer?"

"Permit me to shake hands with you. I admire the question by which you have countermet and rebuked my own. If you are not in a hurry, will you sit down and let us talk?"

The minstrel inclined his head and seated himself. His dog—now emerged from the brushwood—gravely approached Kenelm, who with greater gravity regarded him; then, wagging his tail, reposed on his haunches, intent with ear erect on a stir in the neighboring reeds, evidently considering whether it was caused by a fish or a water-rat.

"I asked you, sir, if you had ever listened to the cuckoo—from no irrelevant curiosity;—for often on summer days, when one is talking with one's self—and, of course, puzzling one's self—a voice breaks out, as it were from the heart of Nature, so far is it and yet so near; and it says something very quieting, very musical, so that one is tempted inconsiderately and foolishly to exclaim, 'Nature replies to me.' The cuckoo has served me that trick pretty often. Your song is a better answer to a man's self-questionings than he can ever get from a cuckoo."

"I doubt that," said the minstrel. "Song, at the best, is but the echo of some voice from the heart of Nature. And if the cuckoo's note seemed to you such a voice, it was an answer to your questionings perhaps more simply truthful than man can utter, if you had rightly construed the language."

"My good friend," answered Kenelm, "what you say sounds very prettily; and it contains a sentiment which has been amplified by certain critics into that measureless domain of dunderheads which is vulgarly called Bosh. But though Nature is never silent, though she abuses the privileges of her age in being tediously gossiping and garrulous—Nature never replies to our questions—she can't understand an argument—she has never read Mr. Mill's work on Logic. In fact, as it is truly said by a great philosopher, 'Nature has no mind.' Every man who addresses her is compelled to force upon her for a moment the loan of his own mind. And if she answers a question which his own mind puts to her, it is only by such a reply as his own mind teaches to her parrot-like lips. And as every man has a different mind, so every man gets a different answer. Nature is a lying old humbug."

The minstrel laughed merrily; and his laugh was as sweet as his chant.

"Poets would have a great deal to unlearn if they are to look upon Nature in that light."

"Bad poets would, and so much the better for them and their readers."

"Are not good poets students of Nature?"

"Students of Nature, certainly—as surgeons study anatomy by dissecting a dead body. But the good poet, like the good surgeon, is the man who considers that study merely as the necessary A B C and not as the all-in-all essential to skill in his practice. I do not give the fame of a good surgeon to a man who fills a book with details, more or less accurate, of fibres, and nerves, and muscles; and I don't give the fame of a good poet to a man who makes an inventory of the Rhine or the Vale of Gloucester. The good surgeon and the good poet are they who understand the living man. What is that poetry of drama which Aristotle justly ranks as the highest? Is it not a poetry in which description of inanimate Nature must of necessity be very brief and general; in which even the external form of man is so indifferent a consideration that it will vary with each other who performs the part? A Hamlet may be fair or dark. A Macbeth may be short or tall. The merit of dramatic poetry consists in the substituting for what is commonly called Nature (viz., external and material Nature), creatures intellectual, emotional, but so purely immaterial that they may be said to be all mind and soul, accepting the temporary loans of any such bodies at hand as actors may offer, in order to be made palpable and visible to the audience, but needing no such bodies to be palpable and visible to readers. The highest kind of poetry is therefore that which has least to do with external Nature. But every grade has its merit more or less genuinely great according as it instils into Nature that which is not there—the reason and the soul of man."

"I am not much disposed," said the minstrel, to acknowledge any one form of poetry to be practically higher than another—that is, so far as to elevate the poet who cultivates what you call the highest with some success, above the rank of the poet who cultivates what you call a very inferior school with a success much more

triumphant. In theory, dramatic poetry may be higher than lyric, and 'Venice Preserved' is a very successful drama; but I think Burns a greater poet than Otway."

"Possibly he may be; but I know of no lyrical poet, at least among the moderns, who treats less of Nature as the mere outward form of things, or more passionately animates her frame work with his own human heart, than does Robert Burns. Do you suppose when a Greek, in some perplexity of reason or conscience, addressed a question to the oracular oak-leaves of Dodona, that the oak-leaves answered him? Don't you rather believe that the question suggested by his mind was answered by the mind of his fellow-man, the priest, who made the oak-leaves the mere vehicle of communication, as you and I might make such vehicle in a sheet of writing-paper? Is not the history of superstition a chronicle of the follies of man in attempting to get answers from external Nature?"

"But," said the minstrel, "have I not somewhere heard or read that the experiments of Science are the answers made by Nature to the questions put to her by man?"

"They are the answers which his own mind suggests to her, nothing more. His mind studies the laws of matter, and in that study makes experiments on matter; out of those experiments his mind, according to its previous knowledge or natural acuteness, arrives at its own deductions, and hence arise the sciences of mechanics and chemistry, etc. But the matter itself gives no answer; the answer varies according to the mind that puts the question, and the progress of science consists in the perpetual correction of the errors and falsehoods which preceding minds conceived to be the correct answers they received from Nature. It is the supernatural within us—viz., Mind—which can alone guess at the mechanism of the natural—viz., Matter. A stone cannot question a stone."

The minstrel made no reply. And there was a long silence, broken but by the hum of the insects, the ripple of onward waves, and the sigh of the wind through reeds.

CHAPTER XVII.

SAID Kenelm, at last breaking silence—

> "'Rapiamus, amici,
> Occasionem de die, dumque virent genua,
> Et decet, obducta solvatur fronte senectus!'"

"Is not that quotation from Horace?" asked the minstrel.

"Yes; and I made it insidiously, in order to see if you had not acquired what is called a classical education."

"I might have received such education, if my tastes and my destinies had not withdrawn me in boyhood from studies of which I did not then comprehend the full value. But I did pick up a smattering of Latin at school; and from time to time since I left school, I have endeavored to gain some little knowledge of the most popular Latin poets—chiefly, I own to my shame, by the help of literal English translations."

"As a poet yourself, I am not sure that it would be an advantage to know a dead language so well that its forms and modes of thought ran, though perhaps unconsciously, into those of the living one in which you compose. Horace might have been a still better poet if he had not known Greek better than you know Latin."

"It is at least courteous in you to say so," answered the singer, with a pleased smile.

"You would be still more courteous," said Kenelm, "if you would pardon an impertinent question, and tell me whether it is for a wager that you wander through the land, Homer-like, as a wandering minstrel, and allow that intelligent quadruped, your companion, to carry a tray in his mouth for the reception of pennies?"

"No, it is not for a wager; it is a whim of mine, which I fancy, from the tone of your conversation, you could understand, being, apparently, somewhat whimsical yourself."

"So far as whim goes, be assured of my sympathy."

"Well, then, though I follow a calling by the exercise of which I secure a modest income—my passion is verse. If the seasons were always summer, and life were always youth, I should like to pass through the world singing. But I have never ventured to publish any verses of mine. If they fell still-born it would give me more pain than such wounds to

vanity ought to give to a bearded man; and if they were assailed or ridiculed, it might seriously injure me in my practical vocation. That last consideration, were I quite alone in the world, might not much weigh on me; but there are others for whose sake I should like to make fortune and preserve station. Many years ago—it was in Germany—I fell in with a German student who was very poor, and who did make money by wandering about the country with lute and song. He has since become a poet of no mean popularity, and he has told me that he is sure he found the secret of that popularity in habitually consulting popular tastes during his roving apprenticeship to song. His example strongly impressed me. So I began this experiment; and for several years my summers have been all partly spent in this way. I am only known, as I think I told you before, in the rounds I take as 'The Wandering Minstrel.' I receive the trifling moneys that are bestowed on me as proofs of a certain merit. I should not be paid by poor people if I did not please; and the songs which please them best are generally those I love best myself. For the rest, my time is not thrown away—not only as regards bodily health, but healthfulness of mind—all the current of one's ideas become so freshened by months of playful exercise and varied adventure."

"Yes, the adventure is varied enough," said Kenelm, somewhat ruefully; for he felt, in shifting his posture, a sharp twinge of his bruised muscles. "But don't you find those mischief-makers, the women, always mix themselves up with adventure?"

"Bless them! of course," said the minstrel, with a ringing laugh. "In life, as on the stage, the petticoat interest is always the strongest."

"I don't agree with you there," said Kenelm, drily. "And you seem to me to utter a claptrap beneath the rank of your understanding. However, this warm weather indisposes one to disputation; and I own that a petticoat, provided it be red, is not without the interest of color in a picture."

"Well, young gentleman," said the minstrel, rising, "the day is wearing on, and I must wish you good-bye; probably, if you were to ramble about the country as I do, you would see too many pretty girls not to teach you the strength of petticoat interest—not in pictures alone; and should I meet you again, I may find you writing love verses yourself."

"After a conjecture so unwarrantable, I part company with you less reluctantly than I otherwise might do. But I hope we shall meet again."

"Your wish flatters me much, but, if we do, pray respect the confidence I have placed in you, and regard my wandering minstrelsy and my dog's tray as sacred secrets. Should we not so meet, it is but a prudent reserve on my part if I do not give you my right name and address."

"There you show the cautious common-sense which belongs rarely to lovers of verse and petticoat interest. What have you done with your guitar?"

"I do not pace the roads with that instrument; it is forwarded to me from town to town under a borrowed name, together with other raiment than this should I have cause to drop my character of wandering minstrel."

The two men here exchanged a cordial shake of the hand. And as the minstrel went his way along the river-side, his voice in chanting seemed to lend to the wavelets a livelier murmur, to the reeds a less plaintive sigh.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In his room, solitary and brooding, sate the defeated hero of a hundred fights. It was now twilight; but the shutters had been partially closed all day, in order to exclude the sun, which had never before been unwelcome to Tom Bowles, and they still remained so, making the twilight doubly twilight, till the harvest moon, rising early, shot its ray through the crevice, and forced a silvery track amid the shadows of the floor.

The man's head drooped on his breast, his strong hands rested listlessly on his knees; his attitude was that of utter despondency and prostration. But in the expression of his face there were the signs of some dangerous and restless thought which belied, not the gloom, but the stillness of the posture. His brow, which was habitually open and frank, in its defying, aggressive boldness, was now contracted into deep furrows, and lowered darkly over his downcast, half-closed eyes. His lips were so

tightly compressed that the face lost its roundness, and the massive bone of the jaw stood out hard and salient. Now and then, indeed, the lips opened, giving vent to a deep, impatient sigh, but they reclosed as quickly as they had parted. It was one of those crises in life which find all the elements that make up a man's former self in lawless anarchy; in which the Evil One seems to enter and direct the storm; in which a rude untutored mind, never before harboring a thought of crime, sees the crime start up from an abyss, feels it to be an enemy, yet yields to it as a fate. So that when, at the last, some wretch, sentenced to the gibbet, shudderingly looks back to the moment 'that trembled between two worlds'—the world of the man guiltless, the world of the man guilty—he says to the holy, highly educated, rational, passionless priest who confesses him and calls him 'brother,' "The devil put it into my head."

At that moment the door opened; at its threshold there stood the man's mother—whom he had never allowed to influence his conduct, though he loved her well in his rough way—and the hated fellow-man whom he longed to see dead at his feet. The door reclosed, the mother was gone, without a word, for her tears choked her; the fellow-man was alone with him. Tom Bowles looked up, recognized his visitor, cleared his brow, and rubbed his mighty hands.

CHAPTER XIX.

KENELM CHILLINGLY drew a chair close to his antagonist's, and silently laid a hand on his.

Tom Bowles took up the hand in both his own, turned it curiously towards the moonlight, gazed at it, poised it, then with a sound between groan and laugh tossed it away as a thing hostile but trivial, rose and locked the door, came back to his seat and said bluffly—

"What do you want with me now?"

"I want to ask you a favor."

"Favor?"

"The greatest which man can ask from man—friendship. You see, my dear Tom," continued Kenelm, making himself quite at home—throwing his arm over the back of Tom's chair, and stretching his legs comfortably as one does by one's own fireside; "you see, my dear Tom, that men like us—young, single, not on the whole bad-looking as men go—can find sweethearts in plenty. If one does not like us, another will; sweethearts are sown everywhere like nettles and thistles. But the rarest thing in life is a friend. Now, tell me frankly, in the course of your wanderings did you ever come into a village where you could not have got a sweetheart if you had asked for one; and if, having got a sweetheart, you had lost her, do you think you would have had any difficulty in finding another? But have you such a thing in the world, beyond the pale of your own family, as a true friend—a man friend; and supposing that you had such a friend—a friend who would stand by you through thick and thin—who would tell you your faults to your face, and praise you for your good qualities behind your back—who would do all he could to save you from a danger, and all he could to get you out of one,—supposing you had such a friend, and lost him, do you believe that if you lived to the age of Methuselah you could find another? You don't answer me; you are silent. Well, Tom, I ask you to be such a friend to me, and I will be such a friend to you."

Tom was so thoroughly 'taken a-back' by this address that he remained dumbfounded. But he felt as if the clouds in his soul were breaking, and a ray of sunlight were forcing its way through the sullen darkness. At length, however, the receding rage within him returned, though with vacillating step, and he growled between his teeth—

"A pretty friend, indeed! robbing me of my girl! Go along with you!"

"She was not your girl any more than she was or ever can be mine."

"What, you ben't after her?"

"Certainly not; I am going to Luscombe, and I ask you to come with me. Do you think I am going to leave you here?"

"What is it to you?"

"Everything. Providence has permitted me to save you from the most lifelong of all sorrows. For—think! Can any sorrow be more lasting than had been yours if you had attained your wish; if you had forced or frightened a woman to be your partner till death do part—you loving her, she loathing you; you conscious, night and day, that your very love had insured her misery, and that misery haunt-

ing you like a ghost !—from that sorrow I have saved you. May Providence permit me to complete my work, and save you also from the most irredeemable of all crimes ! Look into your soul, then recall the thoughts which all day long, and not least at the moment I crossed this threshold, were rising up, making reason dumb and conscience blind, and then lay your hand on your heart and say—'I am guiltless of a dream of murder.'"

The wretched man sprang up erect, menacing, and, meeting Kenelm's calm, steadfast, pitying gaze, dropped no less suddenly—dropped on the floor, covered his face with his hands, and a great cry came forth between sob and howl.

"Brother," said Kenelm, kneeling beside him, and twining his arm round the man's heaving breast, "it is over now; with that cry the demon that maddened you has fled for ever."

CHAPTER XX.

When, some time after, Kenelm quitted the room and joined Mrs. Bowles below, he said cheerily, "All right; Tom and I are sworn friends. We are going together to Luscumbe the day after to-morrow—Sunday; just write a line to his uncle to prepare him for Tom's visit, and send thither his clothes, as we shall walk, and steal forth unobserved betimes in the morning. Now go up and talk to him; he wants a mother's soothing and petting. He is a noble fellow at heart, and we shall be all proud of him some day or other."

As he walked back towards the farm-house, Kenelm encountered Mr. Lethbridge, who said—"I have come from Mr. Saunderson's, where I went in search of you. There is an unexpected hitch in the negotiation for Mrs. Bawtrey's shop. After seeing you this morning I fell in with Mr. Travers's bailiff, and he tells me that her lease does not give her the power to sublet without the Squire's consent; and that as the premises were originally let on very low terms to a favored and responsible tenant, Mr. Travers cannot be expected to sanction the transfer of the lease to a poor basket-maker—in fact, though he will accept Mrs. Bawtrey's resignation, it must be in favor of an applicant whom he desires to oblige. On hearing this I rode over to the Park and saw Mr. Travers himself. But he was obdurate to my pleadings. All I could get him to say was—'Let the stranger who interests himself in the matter come and talk to me. I should like to see the man who thrashed that brute Tom Bowles; if he got the better of him perhaps he may get the better of me. Bring him with you to my harvest-supper to-morrow evening.' Now will you come?"

"Nay," said Kenelm, reluctantly; "but if he only asks me in order to gratify a vulgar curiosity, I don't think I have much chance of serving Will Somers. What do you say?"

"The Squire is a good man of business, and though no one can call him unjust or grasping, still he is very little touched by sentiment; and we must own that a sickly cripple like poor Will is not a very eligible tenant. If, therefore, it depended only on your chance with the Squire, I should not be very sanguine. But we have an ally in his daughter. She is very fond of Jessie Wiles, and she has shown great kindness to Will. In fact, a sweeter, more benevolent, sympathizing nature than that of Cecilia Travers does not exist. She has great influence with her father, and through her you may win him."

"I particularly dislike having anything to do with women," said Kenelm, churlishly. "Parsons are accustomed to get round them. Surely, my dear sir, you are more fit for that work than I am."

"Permit me humbly to doubt that proposition; one don't get very quickly round the women when one carries the weight of years on one's back. But whenever you want the aid of a parson to bring your own wooing to a happy conclusion, I shall be happy, in my special capacity of parson, to perform the ceremony required."

"*Dii meliora!*" said Kenelm, gravely. "Some ills are too serious to be approached even in joke. As for Miss Travers, the moment you call her benevolent you inspire me with horror. I know too well what a benevolent girl is—officious, restless, fidgety, with a snub-nose, and her pockets full of tracts. I will not go to the harvest-supper."

"Hist!" said the parson, softly. They were now passing the cottage of Mrs. Somers; and while Kenelm was haranguing against

benevolent girls, Mr. Lethbridge had paused before it, and was furtively looking in at the window. "Hist! and come here,—gently."

Kenelm obeyed, and looked in through the window. Will was seated—Jessie Wiles had nestled herself at his feet, and was holding his hand in both hers, looking up into his face. Her profile alone was seen, but its expression was unutterably soft and tender. His face, bent downwards towards her, wore a mournful expression; nay—the tears were rolling silently down his cheeks. Kenelm listened, and heard her say, "Don't talk so, Will, you break my heart; it is I who am not worthy of you."

"Parson," said Kenelm, as they walked on, "I must go to that confounded harvest-supper. I begin to think there is something true in the venerable platitude about love in a cottage. And Will Somers must be married in haste, in order to repent at leisure."

"I don't see why a man should repent having married a good girl whom he loves."

"You don't? Answer me candidly. Did you never meet a man who repented having married?"

"Of course I have; very often."

"Well, think again, and answer as candidly. Did you ever meet a man who repented not having married?"

The parson mused, and was silent.

"Sir," said Kenelm, "your reticence proves your honesty, and I respect it." So saying, he bounded off, and left the parson crying out wildly, "But—but——"

CHAPTER XXI.

Mr. Saunderson and Kenelm sate in the arbor; the former sipping his grog and smoking his pipe—the latter looking forth into the summer night skies with an earnest yet abstracted gaze, as if he were trying to count the stars in the Milky Way.

"Ha!" said Mr. Saunderson, who was concluding an argument; "you see it now, don't you?"

"I—not a bit of it. You tell me that your grandfather was a farmer, and your father was a farmer, and that you have been a farmer for thirty years; and from these premises you deduce the illogical and irrational conclusion that therefore your son must be a farmer."

"Young man, you may think yourself very knowing 'cause you have been at the 'Varsity, and swept away a headful of book-learning."

"Stop," quoth Kenelm. "You grant that a university is learned."

"Well, I suppose so."

"But how could it be learned if those who quitted it brought the learning away? We leave it all behind us in the care of the tutors. But I know what you are going to say—that it is not because I had read more books than you have that I was to give myself airs and pretend to have more knowledge of life than a man of your years and experience. Agreed, as a general rule. But does not every doctor, however wise and skilful, prefer taking another doctor's opinion about himself, even though that other doctor has just started in practice? And, seeing that doctors, taking them as a body, are monstrous clever fellows, is not the example they set us worth following? Does it not prove that no man, however wise, is a good judge of his own case? Now, your son's case is really your case—you see it through the medium of your likings and dislikings—and insist upon forcing a square peg into a round hole, because in a round hole you, being a round peg, feel tight and comfortable. Now I call that irrational."

"I don't see why my son has any right to fancy himself a square peg," said the farmer, doggedly, "when his father, and his grandfather, and his great-grandfather, have been round pegs; and it is agin' nature for any creature not to take after its own kind. A dog is a pointer or a sheep-dog according as its forebears were pointers or sheep-dogs. There," cried the farmer, triumphantly, shaking the ashes out of his pipe, "I think I have posed you, young master!"

"No; for you have taken it for granted that the breeds have not been crossed. But suppose that a sheep-dog has married a pointer, are you sure that his son will not be more of a pointer than a sheep-dog?"

Mr. Saunderson arrested himself in the task of refilling his pipe, and scratched his head.

"You see," continued Kenelm, "that you have crossed the breed. You married a tradesman's daughter, and I dare say her grandfather and great-grandfather were tradesmen too. Now, most sons take after their mothers, and therefore Mr. Saunderson, junior,

takes after his kind on the distaff side, and comes into the world a square peg, which can only be tight and comfortable in a square hole. It is no use arguing, farmer: your boy must go to his uncle; and there's an end of the matter."

"By goles!" said the farmer, "you seem to think you can talk me out of my senses."

"No; but I think if you had your own way you would talk your son into the workhouse."

"What! by sticking to the land like his father before him? Let a man stick by the land, and the land will stick by him."

"Let a man stick in the mud, and the mud will stick to him. You put your heart in your farm, and your son would only put his foot into it. Courage! Don't you see that Time is a whirligig, and all things come round? Every day somebody leaves the land and goes off into trade. By-and-by he grows rich, and then his great desire is to get back to the land again. He left it the son of a farmer, he returns to it as a squire. Your son, when he gets to be fifty, will invest his savings in acres, and have tenants of his own. Lord, how he will lay down the law to them! I would not advise you to take a farm under him."

"Catch me at it!" said the farmer. "He would turn all the contents of the 'pothecary's shop into my fallows, and call it 'progress.'"

"Let him physic the fallows when he has farms of his own: keep yours out of his chemical clutches. Come, I shall tell him to pack up and be off to his uncle's next week."

"Well, well," said the farmer, in a resigned tone,—"a wilful man must e'en have his way."

"And the best thing a sensible man can do is not to cross it. Mr. Saunderson, give me your honest hand. You are one of those men who put the sons of good fathers in mind of their own; and I think of mine when I say, 'God bless you!'"

Quitting the farmer, Kenelm re-entered the house, and sought Mr. Saunderson, junior, in his own room. He found that young gentleman still up, and reading an eloquent tract on the Emancipation of the Human Race from all Tyrannical Control—Political, Social, Ecclesiastical, and Domestic.

The lad looked up sulkily and said, on encountering Kenelm's melancholic visage, "Ah! I see you have talked with the old governor, and he'll not hear of it."

"In the first place," answered Kenelm, "since you value yourself on a superior education, allow me to advise you to study the English language, as the forms of it are maintained by the elder authors—whom, in spite of an Age of Progress, men of superior education esteem. No one who has gone through that study—no one, indeed, who has studied the Ten Commandments in the vernacular, commits the mistake of supposing that 'the old governor' is a synonymous expression for 'Father.' In the second place, since you pretend to the superior enlightenment which results from a superior education, learn to know better your own self before you set up as a teacher of mankind. Excuse the liberty I take, as your sincere well-wisher, when I tell you that you are at present a conceited fool—in short, that which makes one boy call another 'an ass.' But when one has a poor head he may redeem the average balance of humanity by increasing the wealth of the heart. Try and increase yours. Your father consents to your choice of your lot at the sacrifice of all his own inclinations. This is a sore trial to a father's pride, a father's affection; and few fathers make such sacrifices with a good grace. I have thus kept my promise to you, and enforced your wishes on Mr. Saunderson's judgment, because I am sure you would have been a very bad farmer. It now remains for you to show that you can be a very good tradesman. You are bound in honor to me and to your father to try your best to be so; and meanwhile leave the task of upsetting the world to those who have no shop in it, which would go crash in the general tumble. And so good night to you."

To these admonitory words, *sacro digna silentio*, Saunderson junior listened with a dropping jaw and fascinated staring eyes. He felt like an infant to whom the nurse has given a hasty shake, and who is too stupefied by that operation to know whether he is hurt or not.

A minute after Kenelm had quitted the room he reappeared at the door, and said in a conciliatory whisper, "Don't take it to heart that I called you a conceited fool and an ass. These terms are no doubt just as applicable to myself. But there is a more conceited fool and a greater ass than either of us, and that is, the Age in which we have the misfortune to be born—an Age of Progress, Mr. Saunderson, junior—an Age of Prigs!"

BOOK THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

If there were a woman in the world who might be formed and fitted to reconcile Kenelm Chillingly to the sweet troubles of love and the pleasant bickerings of wedded life, one might reasonably suppose that that woman could be found in Cecilia Travers. An only daughter, and losing her mother in childhood, she had been raised to the mistress-ship of a household at an age in which most girls are still putting their dolls to bed; and thus had early acquired that sense of responsibility, accompanied with the habits of self-reliance, which seldom fails to give a certain nobility to character; though almost as often, in the case of women, it steals away the tender gentleness which constitutes the charm of their sex.

It had not done so in the instance of Cecilia Travers, because she was so woman-like that even the exercise of power could not make her man-like. There was in the depth of her nature such an instinct of sweetness, that wherever her mind toiled and wandered it gathered and hoarded honey.

She had one advantage over most girls in the same rank of life—she had not been taught to fritter away such capacities for culture as Providence gave her in the sterile nothingnesses which are called feminine accomplishments. She did not paint figures out of drawing in meagre water-colors; she had not devoted years of her life to the inflicting on polite audiences the boredom of Italian bravuras, which they could hear better sung by a third-rate professional singer in a metropolitan music-hall. I am afraid she had no other female accomplishments than those by which the sempstress or embroideress earns her daily bread. That sort of work she loved, and she did it deftly.

But if she had not been profitlessly plagued by masters, Cecilia Travers had been singularly favored by her father's choice of a teacher, —no great merit in him either. He had a prejudice against professional governesses, and it chanced that among his own family connections was a certain Mrs. Campion, a lady of some literary distinction, whose husband had held a high situation in one of our public offices, and living, much to his satisfaction, up to a very handsome income, had died, much to the astonishment of others, without leaving a farthing behind him.

Fortunately, there were no children to provide for. A small government pension was allotted to the widow; and as her husband's house had been made by her one of the pleasantest in London, she was popular enough to be invited by numerous friends to their country seats—among others, by Mr. Travers. She came intending to stay a fortnight. At the end of that time she had grown so attached to Cecilia, and Cecilia to her, and her presence had become so pleasant and so useful to her host, that the Squire entreated her to stay and undertake the education of his daughter. Mrs. Campion, after some hesitation, gratefully consented; and thus Cecilia, from the age of eight to her present age of nineteen, had the inestimable advantage of living in constant companionship with a woman of richly-cultivated mind, accustomed to hear the best criticisms on the best books, and adding to no small accomplishment in literature the refinement of manners and that sort of prudent judgment which result from habitual intercourse with an intellectual and gracefully world-wise circle of society; so that Cecilia herself, without being at all blue or pedantic, became one of those rare young women with whom a well-educated man can converse on equal terms—from whom

he gains as much as he can impart to her; while a man who, not caring much about books, is still gentleman enough to value good breeding, felt a relief in exchanging the forms of his native language without the shock of hearing that a bishop was "a swell," or a croquet-party "awfully jolly."

In a word, Cecilia was one of those women whom Heaven forms for man's helpmate—who, if he were born to rank and wealth, would, as his partner, reflect on them a new dignity, and add to their enjoyment by bringing forth their duties—who, not less if the husband she chose were poor and struggling, would encourage, sustain, and soothe him, take her own share of his burdens, and temper the bitterness of life with the all-recompensing sweetness of her smile.

Little, indeed, as yet had she ever thought of love or of lovers. She had not even formed to herself any one of those ideals which float before the eyes of most girls when they enter their teens. But of two things she felt inly convinced—first, that she could never wed where she did not love; and secondly, that where she did love it would be for life.

And now I close this sketch with a picture of the girl herself. She has just come into her room from inspecting the preparations for the evening entertainment which her father is to give to his tenants and rural neighbors.

She has thrown aside her straw-hat, and put down the large basket which she has emptied of flowers. She pauses before the glass, smoothing back the ruffled bands of her hair—hair of a dark, soft chestnut, silky and luxuriant—never polluted, and never, so long as she lives, to be polluted by auricomous cosmetics:—far from that delicate darkness, every tint of the colors traditionally dedicated to the locks of Judas.

Her complexion, usually of that soft bloom which inclines to paleness, is now heightened into glow by exercise and sunlight. The features are small and feminine, the eyes dark with long lashes, the mouth singularly beautiful, with a dimple on either side, and parted now in a half-smile at some pleasant recollection, giving a glimpse of small teeth glistening as pearls. But the peculiar charm of her face is in an expression of serene happiness, that sort of happiness which seems as if it had never been interrupted by a sorrow, had never been troubled by a sin—that holy kind of happiness which belongs to innocence, the light reflected from a heart and conscience alike at peace.

CHAPTER II.

It was a lovely summer evening for the Squire's rural entertainment. Mr. Travers had some guests staying with him; they had dined early for the occasion, and were now grouped with their host, a little before six o'clock, on the lawn. The house was of irregular architecture, altered or added to at various periods from the reign of Elizabeth to that of Victoria: at one end, the oldest part, a gable with mullion windows; at the other, the newest part, a flat-roofed wing, with modern sashes opening to the ground, the intermediate part much hidden by a verandah covered with creepers in full bloom. The lawn was a spacious table-land facing the west, and backed by a green and gentle hill, crowned with the ruins of an ancient priory. On one side of the lawn stretched a flower-garden and pleasure-ground, originally planned by Repton; on the opposite angles of the sward were placed two large marquees—one for dancing, the other for supper. Towards the south the view was left open, and commanded the prospect of an old English park, not of the stateliest character,—not intersected with ancient avenues, nor clothed with profitless fern as lairs for deer—but the park of a careful agriculturist, uniting profit with show, the sward duly drained and nourished, fit to flatten bullocks in an incredibly short time, and somewhat spoilt to the eye by subdivisions of wire-fence. Mr. Travers was renowned for skilful husbandry, and the general management of land to the best advantage. He had come into the estate while still in childhood, and thus enjoyed the accumulations of a long minority. He had entered the Guards at the age of eighteen, and having more command of money than most of his contemporaries, though they might be of higher rank and the sons of richer men, he had been much courted and much plundered. At the age of twenty-five he found himself one of the leaders of fashion, renowned chiefly for reckless daring wherever honor could be plucked out of the nettle dan-

ger; a steeplechaser, whose exploits made a quiet man's hair stand on end; a rider across country, taking leaps which a more cautious huntsman carefully avoided. Known at Paris as well as in London, he had been admired by ladies whose smiles had cost him duels, the marks of which still remained in glorious scars on his person. No man ever seemed more likely to come to direst grief before attaining the age of thirty, for at twenty-seven all the accumulations of his minority were gone; and his estate, which, when he came of age, was scarcely three thousand a-year, but entirely at his own disposal, was mortgaged up to its eyes.

His friends began to shake their heads and call him "poor fellow;" but with all his wild faults, Leopold Travers had been wholly pure from the two vices out of which a man does not often redeem himself. He had never drunk, and he had never gambled. His nerves were not broken, his brain was not besotted. There was plenty of health in him yet, mind and body. At the critical period of his life he married for love, and his choice was a most felicitous one. The lady had no fortune; but, though handsome and high-born, she had no taste for extravagance, and no desire for other society than that of the man she loved. So when he said, "Let us settle in the country and try our best to live on a few hundreds, lay by, and keep the old place out of the market," she consented with a joyful heart: and marvel it was to all how this wild Leopold Travers did settle down; did take to cultivating his home farm with his men from sunrise to sunset, like a common tenant farmer; did contrive to pay the interest on the mortgages, and keep his head above water. After some years of pupilage in this school of thrift, during which his habits became formed, and his whole character braced, Leopold Travers suddenly found himself again rich, through the wife whom he had so prudently married without other dower than her love and her virtues. Her only brother, Lord Eagleton, a Scotch peer, had been engaged in marriage to a young lady, considered to be a rare prize in the lottery of wedlock. The marriage was broken off under very disastrous circumstances; but the young Lord, good-looking and agreeable, was naturally expected to seek speedy consolation in some other alliance. Nevertheless he did not do so;—he became a confirmed invalid, and died single, leaving to his sister all in his power to save from the distant kinsman who succeeded to his lands and title,—a goodly sum, which not only sufficed to pay off the mortgages on Neesdale Park, but bestowed on its owner a surplus which the practical knowledge of country life that he had acquired enabled him to devote with extraordinary profit to the general improvement of his estate. He replaced tumble-down old farm buildings with new constructions on the most approved principles; bought or pensioned off certain slovenly incompetent tenants; threw sundry petty holdings into large farms suited to the buildings he constructed; purchased here and there small bits of land, commodious to the farms they adjoined, and completing the integrity of his ring-fence; stubbed up profitless woods which diminished the value of neighboring arables, by obstructing sun and air, and harboring legions of rabbits; and then seeking tenants of enterprise and capital, more than doubled his original yearly rental, and perhaps more than tripled the market value of his property. Simultaneously with this acquisition of fortune, he emerged from the inhospitable and unsocial obscurity which his previous poverty had compelled, took an active part in county business, proved himself an excellent speaker at public meetings, subscribed liberally to the Hunt, and occasionally joined in it—a less bold but a wiser rider than of yore. In short, as Themistocles boasted that he could make a small state great, so Leopold Travers might boast with equal truth that, by his energies, his judgment, and the weight of his personal character, he had made the owner of a property which had been at his succession to it of third-rate rank in the county, a personage so considerable that no knight of the shire against whom he declared could have been elected, and if he had determined to stand himself he would have been chosen free of expense.

But he said, on being solicited to become a candidate, "When a man once gives himself up to the care and improvement of a landed estate, he has no time and no heart for anything else. An estate is an income or a kingdom, according as the owner chooses to take it. I take it as a kingdom, and I cannot be *roi fainéant*, with a steward for *maire du palais*. A king does not go into the House of Commons."

Three years after this rise in the social lad-

der, Mrs. Travers was seized with congestion of the lungs, followed by pleurisy, and died after less than a week's illness. Leopold never wholly recovered her loss. Though still young, and always handsome, the idea of another wife, the love of another woman, were notions which he dismissed from his mind with a quiet scorn. He was too masculine a creature to parade grief. For some weeks, indeed, he shut himself up in his own room, so rigidly secluded that he would not see even his daughter. But one morning he appeared in his fields as usual, and from that day resumed his old habits, and gradually renewed that cordial interchange of hospitalities which had popularly distinguished him since his accession to wealth. Still people felt that the man was changed; he was more taciturn, more grave: if always just in his dealings, he took the harder side of justice, where in his wife's time he had taken the gentler. Perhaps, to a man of strong will, the habitual intercourse with an amiable woman is essential for those occasions in which Will best proves the fineness of its temper by the facility with which it can be bent.

It may be said that Leopold Travers might have found such intercourse in the intimate companionship of his own daughter. But she was a mere child when his wife died, and she grew up to womanhood too insensibly for him to note the change. Besides, where a man has found a wife his all-in-all, a daughter can never supply her place. The very reverence due to children precludes unrestrained confidence; and there is not that sense of permanent fellowship in a daughter which a man has in a wife,—any day a stranger may appear and carry her off from him. At all events Leopold did not own in Cecilia the softening influence to which he had yielded in her mother. He was fond of her, proud of her, indulgent to her; but the indulgence had its set limits. Whatever she asked solely for herself, he granted; whatever she wished for matters under feminine control —the domestic household, the parish school, the alms-receiving poor—obtained his gentlest consideration. But when she had been solicited by some offending out-of-door dependant, or some petty defaulting tenant to use her good offices in favor of the culprit, Mr. Travers checked her interference by a firm 'No,' though uttered in a mild accent; and accompanied with a masculine aphorism to the effect "that there would be no such things as strict justice and disciplined order in the world if a man yielded to a woman's pleadings in any matter of business between man and man." From this it will be seen that Mr. Lethbridge had overrated the value of Cecilia's alliance in the negotiation respecting Mrs. Bawtrey's premium and shop.

CHAPTER III.

If, having just perused what has thus been written on the biographical antecedents and mental characteristics of Leopold Travers, you, my dear reader, were to be personally presented to that gentleman as he now stands, the central figure of the group gathered round him, on his terrace, you would probably be surprised, —nay, I have no doubt you would say to yourself, "Not at all the sort of man I expected." In that slender form, somewhat below the middle height; in that fair countenance which still, at the age of forty-eight, retains a delicacy of feature and of coloring which is of almost woman-like beauty, and, from the quiet placidity of its expression, conveys at first glance the notion of almost woman-like mildness,—it would be difficult to recognize a man who in youth had been renowned for reckless daring, in maturer years more honorably distinguished for steadfast prudence and determined purpose, and who, alike in faults or in merits, was as emphatically masculine as a biped in trousers can possibly be. Mr. Travers is listening to a young man of about two-and-twenty, the eldest son of the richest nobleman of the county, and who intends to start for the representation of the shire at the next general election, which is close at hand. The Hon. George Belvoir is tall, inclined to be stout, and will look well on the hustings. He has had those pains taken with his education which an English peer generally does take with the son intended to succeed to the representation of an honorable name and the responsibilities of high station. If eldest sons do not often make as great a figure in the world as their younger brothers, it is not because their minds are less cultivated, but because they have less motive power for action. George Belvoir was well read, especially in that sort of reading which befits a

future senator — history, statistics, political economy, so far as that dismal science is compatible with the agricultural interest. He was also well-principled, had a strong sense of discipline and duty, was prepared in politics firmly to uphold as right whatever was proposed by his own party, and to reject as wrong whatever was proposed by the other. At present he was rather loud and noisy in the assertion of his opinions,—young men fresh from the university generally are. It was the secret wish of Mr. Travers that George Belvoir should become his son-in-law—less because of his rank and wealth (though such advantages were not of a nature to be despised by a practical man like Leopold Travers), than on account of those qualities in his personal character which were likely to render him an excellent husband.

Seated on wire benches, just without the verandah, but shaded by its fragrant festoons, were Mrs. Campion and three ladies, the wives of neighboring squires. Cecilia stood a little apart from them, bending over a long-backed Skye terrier, whom she was teaching to stand on his hind-legs.

But see, the company are arriving! How suddenly that green space, ten minutes ago so solitary, has become animated and populous!

Indeed the Park now presented a very lively appearance: vans, carts, and farmers' chaises were seen in crowded procession along the winding road; foot-passengers were swarming towards the house in all directions. The herds and flocks in the various enclosures stopped grazing to stare at the unwonted invaders of their pasture; yet the orderly nature of the host imparted a respect for order to his ruder visitors; not even a turbulent boy attempted to scale the fences, or creep through their wires; all threaded the narrow turnstiles which gave egress from one subdivision of the sward to another.

Mr. Travers turned to George Belvoir—"I see old farmer Steen's yellow gig. Mind how you talk to him, George. He is full of whims and crotchets, and if you once brush his feathers the wrong way he will be as vindictive as a parrot. But he is the man who must second you at the nomination. No other tenant-farmer carries the same weight with his class."

"I suppose," said George, "that if Mr. Steen is the best man to second me at the hustings, he is a good speaker!"

"A good speaker?—in one sense he is. He never says a word too much. The last time he seconded the nomination of the man you are to succeed, this was his speech: 'Brother Electors, for twenty years I have been one of the judges at our county cattle-show. I know one animal from another. Looking at the specimens before us to-day, none of them are as good of their kind as I've seen elsewhere. But if you choose Sir John Hogg, you'll not get the wrong sow by the ear!'"

"At least," said George, after a laugh at this sample of eloquence unadorned, "Mr. Steen does not err on the side of flattery in his commendations of a candidate. But what makes him such an authority with the farmers? Is he a first-rate agriculturist?"

"In thrift, yes!—in spirit, no! He says that all expensive experiments should be left to gentlemen farmers. He is an authority with other tenants—1stly, Because he is a very keen censor of their landlords; 2dly, Because he holds himself thoroughly independent of his own; 3dly, Because he is supposed to have studied the political bearings of questions that affect the landed interest, and has more than once been summoned to give his opinion on such subjects to Committees of both Houses of Parliament. Here he comes. Observe, when I leave you to talk to him, 1stly, That you confess utter ignorance of practical farming. Nothing enrages him like the presumption of a gentleman farmer like myself; 2dly, That you ask his opinion on the publication of Agricultural Statistics, just modestly intimating that you, as at present advised, think that inquisitorial researches into a man's business involve principles opposed to the British Constitution. And on all that he may say as to the shortcomings of landlords in general, and of your father in particular, make no reply, but listen with an air of melancholy conviction. How do you do, Mr. Steen, and how's the mistress? Why have you not brought her with you?"

"My good woman is in the straw again, Squire. Who is that youngster?"

"Hist! let me introduce Mr. Belvoir."

Mr. Belvoir offers his hand.

"No, sir!" vociferates Steen, putting both his own hands behind him. "No offence,

young gentleman. But I don't give my hand at first sight to a man who wants to shake a vote out of it. Not that I know anything against you. But if you be a farmer's friend, rabbits are not, and my Lord your father is a great one for rabbits."

"Indeed you are mistaken there!" cries George, with vehement earnestness. Mr. Travers gave him a nudge, as much as to say, "Hold your tongue." George understood the hint, and is carried off meekly by Mr. Steen down the solitude of the plantations.

The guests now arrived fast and thick. They consisted chiefly not only of Mr. Travers's tenants, but of farmers and their families within the range of eight or ten miles from the Park, with a few of the neighboring gentry and clergy.

It was not a supper intended to include the laboring class. For Mr. Travers had an especial dislike to the custom of exhibiting peasants at feeding-time, as if they were so many tamed animals of an inferior species. When he entertained work-people, he made them comfortable in their own way; and peasants feel more comfortable when not invited to be stared out of countenance.

"Well, Lethbridge," said Mr. Travers, "where is the young gladiator you promised to bring?"

"I did bring him, and he was by my side not a minute ago. He has suddenly given me the slip—*abiit, evasit, erupit.* I was looking round for him in vain when you accosted me."

"I hope he has not seen some guest of mine whom he wants to fight."

"I hope not," answered the parson, doubtfully. "He's a strange fellow. But I think you will be pleased with him—that is, if he can be found. Oh, Mr. Saunderson, how do you do? Have you seen your visitor?"

"No, sir, I have just come. My mistress, Squire, and my three girls;—and this is my son."

"A hearty welcome to all," said the graceful Squire; (turning to Saunderson junior) "I suppose you are fond of dancing. Get yourself a partner. We may as well open the ball."

"Thank you, sir, but I never dance," said Saunderson junior, with an air of austere superiority to an amusement which the March of Intellect had left behind.

"Then you'll have less to regret when you are grown old. But the band is striking up; we must adjourn to the marquee. George" (Mr. Belvoir, escaped from Mr. Steen, had just made his appearance), "will you give your arm to Cecilia, to whom I think you are engaged for the first quadrille?"

"I hope," said George to Cecilia, as they walked towards the marquee, "that Mr. Steen is not an average specimen of the electors I shall have to canvass. Whether he has been brought up to honor his own father and mother I can't pretend to say, but he seems bent upon teaching me not to honor mine. Having taken away my father's moral character upon the unfounded allegation that he loved rabbits better than mankind, he then assailed my innocent mother on the score of religion, and inquired when she was going over to the Church of Rome—basing that inquiry on the assertion that she had taken away her custom from a Protestant grocer and conferred it on a Papist."

"Those are favorable signs, Mr. Belvoir. Mr. Steen always prefaces a kindness by a great deal of incivility. I asked him once to lend me a pony, my own being suddenly taken lame, and he seized that opportunity to tell me that my father was an imposter in pretending to be a judge of cattle; that he was a tyrant, screwing his tenants in order to indulge extravagant habits of hospitality; and implied that it would be a great mercy if we did not live to apply to him, not for a pony, but for parochial relief. I went away indignant. But he sent me the pony. I am sure he will give you his vote."

"Meanwhile," said George, with a timid attempt at gallantry, as they now commenced the quadrille, "I take encouragement from the belief that I have the good wishes of Miss Travers. If ladies had votes, as Mr. Mill recommends, why, then——"

"Why, then, I should vote as papa does," said Miss Travers, simply. "And if women had votes, I suspect there would be very little peace in any household where they did not vote as the man at the head of it wished them."

"But I believe, after all," said the aspirant to Parliament, seriously, "that the advocates for female suffrage would limit it to women independent of masculine control—widows and spinsters voting in right of their own independent tenements."

"In that case," said Cecilia, "I suppose

they would still generally go by the opinion of some man they relied on, or make a very silly choice if they did not."

"You underrate the good sense of your sex."

"I hope not. Do you underrate the good sense of yours, if, in far more than half the things appertaining to daily life, the wisest men say, 'better leave *them* to *the women*'? But you're forgetting the figure—*cavalier seul.*"

"By the way," said George, in another interval of the dance, "do you know a Mr. Chillingly, the son of Sir Peter, of Exmundham, in Westshire?"

"No; why do you ask?"

"Because I thought I caught a glimpse of his face: it was just as Mr. Steen was bearing me away down the plantation. From what you say, I must suppose I was mistaken."

"Chillingly! But surely some persons were talking yesterday at dinner about a young gentleman of that name as being likely to stand for Westshire at the next election, but who had made a very unpopular and eccentric speech on the occasion of his coming of age."

"The same man—I was at college with him—a very singular character. He was thought clever—won a prize or two—took a good degree, but it was generally said that he would have deserved a much higher one if some of his papers had not contained covert jests either on the subjects or the examiners. It is a dangerous thing to set up as a humorist in practical life—especially public life. They say Mr. Pitt had naturally a great deal of wit and humor, but he wisely suppressed any evidence of those qualities in his Parliamentary speeches. Just like Chillingly, to turn into ridicule the important event of festivities in honor of his coming of age—an occasion that can never occur again in the whole course of his life."

"It was bad taste," said Cecilia, "if intentional. But perhaps he was misunderstood, or taken by surprise."

"Misunderstood—possibly; but taken by surprise—no. The coolest fellow I ever met. Not that I have met him very often. Latterly, indeed, at Cambridge, he lived much alone. It was said that he read hard. I doubt that, for my rooms were just over his, and I know that he was much more frequently out of doors than in. He rambled a good deal about the country on foot. I have seen him in by-lanes a dozen miles distant from the town when I have been riding back from the Hunt. He was fond of the water, and pulled a mighty strong oar, but declined to belong to our University crew; yet if ever there was a fight between under-graduates and bargemen, he was sure to be in the midst of it. Yes, a very great oddity indeed, full of contradictions, for a milder, quieter fellow in general intercourse you could not see; and as for the jests of which he was accused in his Examination Papers, his very face should have acquitted him of the charge before any impartial jury of his countrymen."

"You sketch quite an interesting picture of him," said Cecilia. "I wish we did know him; he would be worth seeing."

"And, once seen, you would not easily forget him—a dark, handsome face, with large melancholy eyes, and with one of those spare, slender figures which enable a man to disguise his strength, as a fraudulent billiard-player disguises his play."

The dance had ceased during this conversation, and the speakers were now walking slowly to and fro the lawn amid the general crowd.

"How well your father plays the part of host to these rural folks!" said George, with a secret envy. "Do observe how quietly he puts that shy young farmer at his ease, and now how kindly he deposits that lame old lady on the bench, and places the stool under her feet. What a canvasser he would be; and how young he still looks, and how monstrous handsome!"

This last compliment was uttered as Travers, having made the old lady comfortable, had joined the three Miss Saundersons, dividing his pleasant smile equally between them, and seemingly unconscious of the admiring glances which many another rural beauty directed towards him as he passed along. About the man there was a certain indescribable elegance, a natural suavity free from all that affectation, whether of forced heartiness or condescending civility, which too often characterizes the well-meant efforts of provincial magnates to accommodate themselves to persons of inferior station and breeding. It is a great advantage to a man to have passed his early youth in that most equal and most polished of all democracies—the best society of large capitals. And to such acquired

advantage Leopold Travers added the inborn qualities that please.

Later in the evening Travers, again accosting Mr. Lethbridge, said, "I have been talking much to the Saundersons about that young man who did us the inestimable service of punishing your ferocious parishioner, Tom Bowles; and all I hear so confirms the interest your own account inspired me with, that I should really like much to make his acquaintance. Has not he turned up yet?"

"No; I fear he must have gone. But in that case I hope you will take his generous desire to serve my poor basket-maker into benevolent consideration."

"Do not press me; I feel so reluctant to refuse any request of yours. But I have my own theory as to the management of an estate, and my system does not allow of favor. I should wish to explain that to the young stranger himself. For I hold courage in such honor that I do not like a brave man to leave these parts with an impression that Leopold Travers is an ungracious churl. However, he may not have gone. I will go and look for him myself. Just tell Cecilia that she has danced enough with the gentry, and that I have told farmer Turby's son, a fine young fellow, and a capital rider across country, that I expect him to show my daughter that he can dance as well as he rides."

CHAPTER IV.

Quitting Mr. Lethbridge, Travers turned with a quick step towards the more solitary part of the grounds. He did not find the object of his search in the walks of the plantation; and, on taking the circuit of his demesne, wound his way back towards the lawn through a sequestered rocky hollow in the rear of the marquee, which had been devoted to a fernery. Here he came to a sudden pause; for, seated a few yards before him on a gray crag, and the moonlight full on his face, he saw a solitary man, looking upwards with a still and mournful gaze, evidently absorbed in abstract contemplation.

Recalling the description of the stranger which he had heard from Mr. Lethbridge and the Saundersons, Mr. Travers felt sure that he had come on him at last. He approached gently; and, being much concealed by the tall ferns, Kenelm (for that itinerant it was) did not see him advance, until he felt a hand on his shoulder, and, turning round, beheld a winning smile and heard a pleasant voice.

"I think I am not mistaken," said Leopold Travers, "in assuming you to be the gentleman whom Mr. Lethbridge promised to introduce to me, and who is staying with my tenant, Mr. Saunderson?"

Kenelm rose and bowed. Travers saw at once that it was the bow of a man in his own world, and not in keeping with the Sunday costume of a petty farmer. "Nay," said he, "let us be seated;" and, placing himself on the crag, he made room for Kenelm beside him.

"In the first place," resumed Travers, "I must thank you for having done a public service in putting down the brute force which has long tyrannized over the neighborhood. Often in my young days I have felt the disadvantage of height and sinews, whenever it would have been a great convenience to terminate dispute or chastise insolence by a resort to man's primitive weapons; but I never more lamented my physical inferiority than on certain occasions when I would have given my ears to be able to thrash Tom Bowles myself. It has been as great a disgrace to my estate that that bully should so long have infested it, as it is to the King of Italy not to be able with all his armies to put down a brigand in Calabria."

'Pardon me, Mr. Travers, but I am one of those rare persons who do not like to hear ill of their friends. Mr. Thomas Bowles is a particular friend of mine."

"Eh!" cried Travers, aghast. "'Friend!' you are joking."

"You would not accuse me of joking if you knew me better. But surely you have felt that there are few friends one likes more cordially, and ought to respect more heedfully, than the enemy with whom one has just made it up."

"You say well, and I accept the rebuke," said Travers, more and more surprised. "And I certainly have less right to abuse Mr. Bowles than you have, since I had not the courage to fight him. To turn to another subject less provocative. Mr. Lethbridge has told me of your amiable desire to serve two of his young parishioners—Will Somers and Jessie Wiles—and of your generous offer to pay the money

Mrs. Bawtrey demands for the transfer of her lease. To that negotiation my consent is necessary, and that consent I cannot give. Shall I tell you why?"

"Pray do. Your reasons may admit of argument."

"Every reason admits of argument," said Mr. Travers, amused at the calm assurance of a youthful stranger in anticipating argument with a skilful proprietor on the management of his own property. "I do not, however, tell you my reasons for the sake of argument, but in vindication of my seeming want of courtesy towards yourself. I have had a very hard and a very difficult task to perform in bringing the rental of my estate up to its proper value. In doing so, I have been compelled to adopt one uniform system, equally applied to my largest and my pettiest holdings. That system consists in securing the best and safest tenants I can, at the rents computed by a valuer in whom I have confidence. To this system, universally adopted on my estate, though it incurred much unpopularity at first, I have at length succeeded in reconciling the public opinion of my neighborhood. People began by saying I was hard; they now acknowledge I am just. If I once give way to favor or sentiment, I unhinge my whole system. Every day I am subjected to moving solicitations. Lord Twostars—a keen politician—begs me to give a vacant farm to a tenant because he is an excellent canvasser, and has always voted straight with the Party. Mrs. Fourstars, a most benevolent woman, entreats me not to dismiss another tenant, because he is in distressed circumstances, and has a large family—very good reasons perhaps for my excusing him an arrear, or allowing him a retiring pension, but the worst reasons in the world for letting him continue to ruin himself and my land. Now, Mrs. Bawtrey has a small holding on lease at the inadequate rent of £8 a-year. She asks £45 for its transfer, but she can't transfer the lease without my consent; and I can get £12 a-year as a moderate rental from a large choice of competent tenants. It will better answer me to pay her the £45 myself, which I have no doubt the incoming tenant would pay me back, at least in part; and if he did not, the additional rent would be good interest for my expenditure. Now, you happen to take a sentimental interest, as you pass through the village, in the loves of a needy cripple, whose utmost industry has but served to save himself from parish relief, and a giddy girl without a sixpence, and you ask me to accept these very equivocal tenants instead of substantial ones, and at a rent one-third less than the market value. Suppose that I yielded to your request, what becomes of my reputation for practical, business-like justice? I shall have made an inroad into the system by which my whole estate is managed, and have invited all manner of solicitations on the part of friends and neighbors, which I could no longer consistently refuse, having shown how easily I can be persuaded into compliance by a stranger whom I may never see again. And are you sure, after all, that, if you did prevail on me, you would do the individual good you aim at? It is, no doubt, very pleasant to think one has made a young couple happy. But if that young couple fail in keeping the little shop to which you would transplant them (and nothing more likely—peasants seldom become good shopkeepers), and find themselves, with a family of children, dependent solely, not on the arm of a strong laborer, but the ten fingers of a sickly cripple, who makes clever baskets, for which there is but slight and precarious demand in the neighborhood, may you not have insured the misery of the couple you wished to render happy?"

"I withdraw all argument," said Kenelm, with an aspect so humiliated and dejected, that it would have softened a Greenland bear, or a Council for the Prosecution. "I am more and more convinced that of all the shams in the world, that of benevolence is the greatest. It seems so easy to do good, and it is so difficult to do it. Everywhere, in this hateful civilized life, one runs one's head against a system. A system, Mr. Travers, is man's servile imitation of the blind tyranny of what in our ignorance we call 'Natural Laws,' a mechanical something through which the world is ruled by the cruelty of General Principles, to the utter disregard of individual welfare. By Natural Laws creatures prey on each other, and big fishes eat little ones upon system. It is, nevertheless, a hard thing for the little fish. Every nation, every town, every hamlet, every occupation, has a system, by which, somehow or other, the pond swarms with fishes, of which a great many inferiors contribute to increase the size of a superior. It is an idle benevolence to keep one

solitary gudgeon out of the jaws of a pike. Here am I doing what I thought the simplest thing in the world, asking a gentleman, evidently as good-natured as myself, to allow an old woman to let her premises to a deserving young couple, and paying what she asks for it out of my own money. And I find that I am running against a system, and invading all the laws by which a rental is increased and an estate improved. Mr. Travers, you have no cause for regret in not having beaten Tom Bowles. You have beaten his victor, and I now give up all dream of further interference with the Natural Laws that govern the village which I have visited in vain. I had meant to remove Tom Bowles from that quiet community. I shall now leave him to return to his former habits—to marry Jessie Wiles—which he certainly will do, and——"

"Hold!" cried Mr. Travers. "Do you mean to say that you can induce Tom Bowles to leave the village?"

"I *had* induced him to do it, provided Jessie Wiles married the basket-maker; but as that is out of the question, I am bound to tell him so, and he will stay."

"But if he left, what would become of his business? His mother could not keep it on; his little place is a freehold; the only house in the village that does not belong to me, or I should have ejected him long ago. Would he sell the premises to me?"

"Not if he stays and marries Jessie Wiles. But if he goes with me to Luscombe and settles in that town as a partner to his uncle, I suppose he would be too glad to sell a house of which he can have no pleasant recollections. But what then? You cannot violate your system for the sake of a miserable forge."

"It would not violate my system if, instead of yielding to a sentiment, I gained an advantage; and, to say truth, I should be very glad to buy that forge and the fields that go with it."

"'Tis your affair now, not mine, Mr. Travers. I no longer presume to interfere. I leave the neighborhood to-morrow: see if *you* can negotiate with Mr. Bowles. I have the honor to wish you a good evening."

"Nay, young gentleman, I cannot allow you to quit me thus. You have declined apparently to join the dancers, but you will at least join the supper. Come!"

"Thank you sincerely, no. I came here merely on the business which your system has settled."

"But I am not sure that it is settled." Here Mr. Travers wound his arm within Kenelm's, and looking him full in the face, said, "I know that I am speaking to a gentleman at least equal in rank to myself, but as I enjoy the melancholy privilege of being the older man, do not think I take an unwarrantable liberty in asking if you object to tell me your name. I should like to introduce you to my daughter, who is very partial to Jessie Wiles and to Will Somers. But I can't venture to inflame her imagination by designating you as a prince in disguise."

"Mr. Travers, you express yourself with exquisitive delicacy. But I am just starting in life, and I shrink from mortifying my father by associating my name with a single failure. Suppose I were an anonymous contributor, say, to 'The Londoner,' and I had just brought that highly intellectual journal into discredit by a feeble attempt at a good-natured criticism or a generous sentiment, would that be the fitting occasion to throw off the mask, and parade myself to a mocking world as the imbecile violator of an established system? Should I not, in a moment so untoward, more than ever desire to merge my insignificant unit in the mysterious importance which the smallest Singular obtains when he makes himself a Plural, and speaks not as 'I' but as 'We'? *We* are insensible to the charm of young ladies; *We* are not bribed by suppers; *We*, like the witches of Macbeth, have no name on earth; *We* are the greatest wisdom of the greatest number; *We* are so upon system; *We* salute you, Mr. Travers, and depart unassailable."

Here Kenelm rose, doffed and replaced his hat in majestic salutation, turned towards the entrance of the fernery and found himself suddenly face to face with George Belvoir, behind whom followed, with a throng of guests, the fair form of Cecilia. George Belvoir caught Kenelm by the hand, and exclaimed, "Chillingly! I thought I could not be mistaken."

"Chillingly!" echoed Leopold Travers from behind. "Are you the son of my old friend, Sir Peter?"

Thus discovered and environed, Kenelm did not lose his wonted presence of mind; he turned round to Leopold Travers, who was now close

in his rear, and whispered, "If my father was your friend, do not disgrace his son. Do not say I am a failure. Deviate from your system, and let Will Somers succeed Mrs. Bawtrey." Then reverting his face to Mr. Belvoir, he said tranquilly, "Yes; we have met before."

"Cecilia," said Travers, now interposing, "I am happy to introduce to you as Mr. Chillingly, not only the son of an old friend of mine, not only the knight-errant of whose gallant conduct on behalf of your *protégée* Jessie Wiles we have heard so much, but the eloquent arguer who has conquered my better judgment in a matter on which I thought myself infallible. Tell Mr. Lethbridge that I accept Will Somers as a tenant for Mrs. Bawtrey's premises."

Kenelm grasped the Squire's hand cordially. "May it be in my power to do a kind thing to you, in spite of any system to the contrary!"

"Mr. Chillingly, give your arm to my daughter. You will not now object to join the dancers?"

CHAPTER V.

Cecilia stole a shy glance at Kenelm as the two emerged from the fernery into the open space of the lawn. His countenance pleased her. She thought she discovered much latent gentleness under the cold and mournful gravity of its expression; and attributing the silence he maintained to some painful sense of an awkward position in the abrupt betrayal of his incognito, sought with womanly tact to dispel his supposed embarrassment.

"You have chosen a delightful mode of seeing the country this lovely summer weather, Mr. Chillingly. I believe such pedestrian exercises are very common with University students during the long vacation."

"Very common, though they generally wander in packs like wild dogs or Australian dingoes. It is only a tame dog that one finds on the road travelling by himself; and then, unless he behaves very quietly, it is ten to one that he is stoned as a mad dog."

"But I am afraid, from what I hear, that you have not been travelling very quietly."

"You are quite right, Miss Travers, and I am a sad dog if not a mad one. But pardon me, we are nearing the marquee; the band is striking up, and, alas! I am not a dancing dog."

He released Cecilia's arm, and bowed.

"Let us sit here awhile, then," said she, motioning to a garden-bench. "I have no engagement for the next dance, and as I am a little tired, I shall be glad of a reprieve."

Kenelm sighed, and with the air of a martyr stretching himself on the rack, took his place beside the fairest girl in the county.

"You were at college with Mr. Belvoir?"

"I was."

"He was thought clever there?"

"I have not a doubt of it."

"You know he is canvassing our county for the next election. My father takes a warm interest in his success, and thinks he will be a useful member of Parliament."

"Of that I am certain. For the first five years he will be called pushing, noisy, and conceited, much sneered at by men of his own age, and coughed down on great occasions; for the five following years he will be considered a sensible man in committees, and a necessary feature in debate; at the end of those years he will be an under-secretary; in five years more he will be a Cabinet Minister, and the representative of an important section of opinions: he will be an irreproachable private character, and his wife will be seen wearing the family diamonds at all the great parties. She will take an interest in politics and theology; and if she die before him, her husband will show his sense of wedded happiness by choosing another lady, equally fitted to wear the family diamonds and to maintain the family consequence."

In spite of her laughter, Cecilia felt a certain awe at the solemnity of voice and manner with which Kenelm delivered these oracular sentences, and the whole prediction seemed strangely in unison with her own impressions of the character whose fate was thus shadowed out.

"Are you a fortune-teller, Mr. Chillingly?" she asked, falteringly, and after a pause.

"As good a one as any whose hand you could cross with a shilling."

"Will you tell me my fortune?"

"No; I never tell the fortunes of ladies, because your sex is credulous, and a lady might believe what I tell her. And when we believe such and such is to be our fate, we are too apt

to work out our life into the verification of the belief. If Lady Macbeth had disbelieved in the witches, she would never have persuaded her lord to murder Duncan."

"But can you not predict me a more cheerful fortune than that tragical illustration of yours seems to threaten?"

"The future is never cheerful to those who look on the dark side of the question. Mr. Gray is too good a poet for people to read nowadays, otherwise I should refer you to his lines in the Ode to Eton College—

> 'See how all around us wait,
> The ministers of human fate,
> And black Misfortune's baleful train.'

Meanwhile it is something to enjoy the present. We are young—we are listening to music—there is no cloud over the summer stars—our conscience is clear—our hearts untroubled; why look forward in search of happiness?—shall we ever be happier than we are at this moment?"

Here Mr. Travers came up. "We are going to supper in a few minutes," said he; "and before we lose sight of each other, Mr. Chillingly, I wish to impress on you the moral fact that one good turn deserves another. I have yielded to your wish, and now you must yield to mine. Come and stay a few days with me, and see your benevolent intentions carried out."

Kenelm paused. Now that he was discovered, why should he not pass a few days among his equals? Realities or shams might be studied with squires no less than with farmers; besides, he had taken a liking to Travers. That graceful *ci-devant* Wildair, with the slight form and the delicate face, was unlike rural squires in general. Kenelm paused, and then said, frankly—

"I accept your invitation. Would the middle of next week suit you?"

"The sooner the better. Why not to-morrow?"

"To-morrow I am pre-engaged to an excursion with Mr. Bowles. That may occupy two or three days, and meanwhile I must write home for other garments than those in which I am a sham."

"Come any day you like."

"Agreed."

"Agreed; and, hark! the supper-bell."

"Supper," said Kenelm, offering his arm to Miss Travers,—"supper is a word truly interesting, truly poetical. It associates itself with the entertainments of the ancients—with the Augustan age—with Horace and Mæcenas;—with the only elegant but too fleeting period of the modern world—with the nobles and wits of Paris, when Paris had wits and nobles;—with Molière and the warm-hearted Duke who is said to have been the original of Molière's Misanthrope;—with Madame de Sévigné and the Racine whom that inimitable letter-writer denied to be a poet:—with Swift and Bolingbroke—with Johnson, Goldsmith, and Garrick. Epochs are signalized by their eatings. I honor him who revives the Golden Age of suppers." So saying, his face brightened.

CHAPTER VI.

KENELM CHILLINGLY, ESQ., TO SIR PETER CHILLINGLY, BART., ETC., ETC.

"MY DEAR FATHER,—I am alive and unmarried. Providence has watched over me in these respects; but I have had narrow escapes. Hitherto I have not acquired much worldly wisdom in my travels. It is true that I have been paid two shillings as a day laborer, and, in fact, have fairly earned at least six shillings more; but against that additional claim I generously set off, as an equivalent, my board and lodging. On the other hand, I have spent forty-five pounds out of the fifty which I devoted to the purchase of experience. But I hope you will be a gainer by that investment. Send an order to Mr. William Somers, basket-maker, Graveleigh, ——shire, for the hampers and game-baskets you require, and I undertake to say that you will save twenty per cent. on that article (all expenses of carriage deducted), and do a good action into the bargain. You know, from long habit, what a good action is worth better than I do. I dare say you will be more pleased to learn, than I am to record, the fact, that I have been again decoyed into the society of ladies and gentlemen, and have accepted an invitation to pass a few days at Neesdale Park with Mr. Travers—christened Leopold—who calls you 'his old friend'—a term which I take for granted belongs to that class of poetic exaggeration in which the 'dears' and 'darlings'

of conjugal intercourse may be categorized. Having for that visit no suitable garments in my knapsack, kindly tell Jenkes to forward me a portmanteauful of those which I habitually wore as Kenelm Chillingly, directed to me at 'Neesdale Park, near Beaverston.' Let me find it there on Wednesday.

"I leave this place to-morrow morning in company with a friend of the name of Bowles —no relation to the reverend gentleman of that name who held the doctrine that a poet should bore us to death with fiddle-faddle minutiæ of natural objects in preference to that study of the insignificant creature Man, in his relations to his species, to which Mr. Pope limited the range of his inferior muse; and who, practising as he preached, wrote some very nice verses, to which the Lake school and its successors are largely indebted. My Mr. Bowles has exercised his faculty upon Man, and has a powerful inborn gift in that line which only requires cultivation to render him a match for any one. His more masculine nature is at present much obscured by that passing cloud which, in conventional language, is called 'a Hopeless Attachment.' But I trust, in the course of our excursion, which is to be taken on foot, that this vapor may consolidate by motion, as some old-fashioned astronomers held that the nebula does consolidate into a matter-of-fact world. Is it Rochefoucauld who says that a man is never more likely to form a hopeful attachment for one than when his heart is softened by a hopeless attachment to another? May it be long, my dear father, before you condole with me on the first or congratulate me on the second. —Your affectionate son,

"KENELM."

"Direct to me at Mr. Travers's. Kindest love to my mother."

The answer to this leter is here subjoined as the most convenient place for its insertion, though of course it was not received till some days after the date of my next chapter.

SIR PETER CHILLINGLY, BART., TO KENELM CHILLINGLY, ESQ.

"MY DEAR BOY,—With this I despatch the portmanteau you require to the address that you gave. I remember well Leopold Travers when he was in the Guards—a very handsome and a very wild young fellow. But he had much more sense than people gave him credit for, and frequented intellectual society; at least I met him very often at my friend Campion's, whose house was then the favorite rendezvous of distinguished persons. He had very winning manners, and one could not help taking an interest in him. I was very glad when I heard he had married and reformed. Here I beg to observe that a man who contracts a taste for low company may indeed often marry, but he seldom reforms when he does so. And, on the whole, I should be much pleased to hear that the experience which has cost you forty-five pounds had convinced you that you might be better employed than earning two, or even six shillings, as a day-laborer.

"I have not given your love to your mother, as you requested. In fact, you have placed me in a very false position towards that other author of your eccentric being. I could only guard you from the inquisition of the police and the notoriety of descriptive hand-bills by allowing my lady to suppose that you had gone abroad with the Duke of Clairville and his family. It is easy to tell a fib, but it is very difficult to untell it. However, as soon as you have made up your mind to resume your normal position among ladies and gentlemen, I should be greatly obliged if you would apprise me. I don't wish to keep a fib on my conscience a day longer than may be necessary to prevent the necessity of telling another.

"From what you say of Mr. Bowles's study of Man, and his inborn talent for that scientific investigation, I suppose that he is a professed Metaphysician, and I should be glad of his candid opinion upon the Primary Basis of Morals, a subject upon which I have for three years meditated the consideration of a critical paper. But having lately read a controversy thereon between two eminent philosophers, in which each accuses the other of not understanding him, I have resolved for the present to leave the Basis in its unsettled condition.

"You rather alarm me when you say you have had a narrow escape from marriage. Should you, in order to increase the experience you set out to acquire, decide on trying the effect of a Mrs. Chillingly upon your nervous system, it would be well to let me know a little beforehand, so that I might prepare your

mother's mind for that event. Such household trifles are within her special province; and she would be much put out if a Mrs. Chillingly dropped on her unawares.

"This subject, however, is too serious to admit of a jest even between two persons who understand, so well as you and I do, the secret cipher by which each other's outward style of jest is to be gravely interpreted into the irony which says one thing and means another. My dear boy, you are very young—you are wandering about in a very strange manner—and may, no doubt, meet with many a pretty face by the way, with which you may fancy that you fall in love. You cannot think me a barbarous tyrant if I ask you to promise me, on your honor, that you will not propose to any young lady before you come first to me and submit the case to my examination and approval. You know me too well to suppose that I should unreasonably withhold my consent if convinced that your happiness was at stake. But while what a young man may fancy to be love is often a trivial incident in his life, marriage is the greatest event in it; if on one side it may involve his happiness, on the other side it may insure his misery. Dearest, best, and oddest of sons, give me the promise I ask, and you will free my breast from a terribly anxious thought which now sits on it like a nightmare.

"Your recommendation of a basket-maker comes opportunely. All such matters go through the bailiff's hands, and it was but the other day that Green was complaining of the high prices of the man he employed for hampers and game-baskets. Green shall write to your *protégé*.

"Keep me informed of your proceedings as much as your anomalous character will permit; so that nothing may diminish my confidence that the man who had the honor to be christened Kenelm will not disgrace his name, but acquire the distinction denied to a Peter.—Your affectionate father."

CHAPTER VII.

Villagers lie abed on Sundays later than on workdays, and no shutter was unclosed in a window of the rural street through which Kenelm Chillingly and Tom Bowles went, side by side, in the still soft air of the Sabbath morn. Side by side they went on, crossing the pastoral glebe-lands, where the kine still drowsily reclined under the bowery shade of glinting chestnut leaves; and diving thence into a narrow lane or by-road, winding deep between lofty banks all tangled with convolvulus and wild-rose and honey-suckle.

They walked in silence, for Kenelm, after one or two vain attempts at conversation, had the tact to discover that his companion was in no mood for talk; and being himself one of those creatures whose minds glide easily into the dreamy monologue of reverie, he was not displeased to muse on undisturbed, drinking quietly into his heart the subdued joy of the summer morn, with the freshness of its sparkling dews, the wayward carol of its earliest birds, the serene quietude of its limpid breezy air. Only when they came to fresh turnings in the road that led towards the town to which they were bound, Tom Bowles stepped before his companion, indicating the way by a monosyllable or a gesture. Thus they journeyed for hours, till the sun attained power, and a little wayside inn near a hamlet invited Kenelm to the thought of rest and food.

"Tom," said he then, rousing from his reverie, "what do you say to breakfast?"

Answered Tom sullenly, "I am not hungry—but as you like."

"Thank you, then we will stop here a while. I find it difficult to believe that you are not hungry, for you are very strong, and there are two things which generally accompany great physical strength: the one is a keen appetite; the other is—though you may not suppose it, and it is not commonly known—a melancholic temperament."

"Eh!—a what?"

"A tendency to melancholy. Of course you have heard of Hercules—you know the saying 'as strong as Hercules'?"

"Yes—of course."

"Well, I was first led to the connection between strength, appetite, and melancholy, by reading in an old author, named Plutarch, that Hercules was among the most notable instances of melancholy temperament which the author was enabled to quote. That must have been the traditional notion of the Herculean constitution; and as for appetite, the appetite of Hercules was a standard joke of the

comic writers. When I read that observation it set me thinking, being myself melancholic, and having an exceedingly good appetite. Sure enough, when I began to collect evidence, I found that the strongest men with whom I made acquaintance, including prize-fighters and Irish draymen, were disposed to look upon life more on the shady than the sunny side of the way; in short, they were melancholic. But the kindness of Providence allowed them to enjoy their meals, as you and I are about to do."

In the utterance of this extraordinary crotchet Kenelm had halted his steps; but now striding briskly forward he entered the little inn, and after a glance at its larder, ordered the whole contents to be brought out and placed within a honeysuckle arbor which he spied in the angle of a bowling-green at the rear of the house.

In addition to the ordinary condiments of loaf, and butter, and eggs, and milk, and tea, the board soon groaned beneath the weight of pigeon-pie, cold ribs of beef and shoulder of mutton, remains of a feast which the members of a monthly rustic club had held there the day before. Tom ate little at first; but example is contagious, and gradually he vied with his companion in the diminution of the solid viands before him. Then he called for brandy.

"No," said Kenelm. "No, Tom; you have promised me friendship, and that is not compatible with brandy. Brandy is the worst enemy a man like you can have; and would make you quarrel even with me. If you want a stimulus I allow you a pipe: I don't smoke myself, as a rule, but there have been times in my life when I required soothing, and then I have felt that a whiff of tobacco stills and softens one like the kiss of a little child. Bring this gentleman a pipe."

Tom grunted, but took to the pipe kindly, and in a few minutes, during which Kenelm left him in silence, a lowering furrow between his brown smoothed itself away.

Gradually he felt the sweetening influences of the day and the place, of the merry sunbeams at play amid the leaves of the arbor, of the frank perfume of the honeysuckle, of the warble of the birds before they sank into the taciturn repose of a summer noon.

It was with a reluctant sigh that he rose at last, when Kenelm said, "We have yet far to go, we must push on."

The landlady, indeed, had already given them a hint that she and the family wanted to go to church, and to shut up the house in their absence. Kenelm drew out his purse, but Tom did the same with a return of cloud on his brow, and Kenelm saw that he would be mortally offended if suffered to be treated as an inferior; so each paid his due share, and the two men resumed their wandering. This time it was along a by-path amid fields, which was a shorter cut than the lane they had previously followed, to the main road to Luscombe. They walked slowly till they came to a rustic footbridge which spanned a gloomy trout-stream, not noisy, but with a low, sweet murmur, doubtless the same stream beside which, many miles away, Kenelm had conversed with the minstrel. Just as they came to this bridge there floated to their ears the distant sound of the hamlet church bell.

"Now let us sit here a while and listen," said Kenelm, seating himself on the baluster of the bridge. "I see that you brought away your pipe from the inn, and provided yourself with tobacco: refill the pipe and listen."

Tom half smiled and obeyed.

"O friend," said Kenelm, earnestly, and after a long pause of thought, "do you not feel what a blessed thing it is in this mortal life to be ever and anon reminded that you have a soul?"

Tom, startled, withdrew the pipe from his lips, and muttered—

"Eh!"

Kenelm continued—

"You and I, Tom, are not so good as we ought to be—of that there is no doubt; and good people would say justly that we should now be within yon church itself rather than listening to its bell. Granted, my friend, granted; but still it is something to hear that bell, and to feel by the train of thought which began in our innocent childhood, when we said our prayers at the knees of a mother, that we were lifted beyond this visible Nature, beyond these fields, and woods, and waters, in which, fair though they be, you and I miss something, in which neither you nor I are as happy as the kine in the fields, as the birds on the bough, as the fishes in the water—lifted to a consciousness of a sense vouchsafed to you and to me, not

vouchsafed to the kine, to the bird, and the fish —a sense to comprehend that Nature has a God, and Man has a life hereafter. The bell says that to you and to me. Were that bell a thousand times more musical it could not say that to beast, bird, and fish. Do you understand me, Tom ?"

Tom remains silent for a minute, and then replies—"I never thought of it before; but as you put it I understand."

"Nature never gives to a living thing capacities not practically meant for its benefit and use. If Nature gives to us capacities to believe that we have a Creator whom we never saw, of whom we have no direct proof, who is kind and good and tender beyond all that we know of kind and good and tender on earth, it is because the endowment of capacities to conceive such a Being must be for our benefit and use; it would not be for our benefit and use if it were a lie. Again, if Nature has given to us a capacity to receive the notion that we live again, no matter whether some of us refuse so to believe, and argue against it,—why, the very capacity to receive the idea (for unless we receive it we could not argue against it) proves that it is for our benefit and use; and if there were no such life hereafter, we should be governed and influenced, arrange our modes of life, and mature our civilization, by obedience to a lie, which Nature falsified herself in giving us the capacity to believe. You still understand me ?"

"Yes; it bothers me a little, for you see I am not a parson's man; but I do understand."

"Then, my friend, study to apply—for it requires constant study—study to apply that which you understand to your own case. You are something more than Tom Bowles, the smith and doctor of horses; something more than the magnificent animal who rages for his mate, and fights every rival: the bull does that. You are a soul endowed with the capacity to receive the idea of a Creator so divinely wise and great and good that, though acting by the agency of general laws, He can accommodate them to all individual cases, so that—taking into account the life hereafter, which He grants to you the capacity to believe—all that troubles you now will be proved to you wise and great and good either in this life or the other. Lay that truth to your heart, friend, now—before the bell stops ringing; recall it every time you hear the church bell ring again. And oh, Tom, you have such a noble nature !——"

"I—I ! don't jeer me—don't."

"Such a noble nature; for you can love so passionately, you can war so fiercely, and yet, when convinced that your love would be misery to her you love, can resign it; and yet, when beaten in your war, can so forgive your victor that you are walking in this solitude with him as a friend, knowing that you have but to drop a foot behind him in order to take his life in an unguarded moment; and rather than take his life, you would defend it against an army. Do you think I am so dull as not to see all that? and is not all that a noble nature ?"

Tom Bowles covered his face with his hands, and his broad breast heaved.

"Well, then, to that noble nature I now trust. I myself have done little good in life. I may never do much; but let me think that I have not crossed your life in vain for you and for those whom your life can color for good or for bad. As you are strong, be gentle; as you can love one, be kind to all; as you have so much that is grand as Man—that is, the highest of God's works on earth,—let all your acts attach your manhood to the idea of Him, to whom the voice of the bell appeals. Ah ! the bell is hushed; but not your heart, Tom,—that speaks still."

Tom was weeping like a child.

CHAPTER VIII.

Now when our two travellers resumed their journey, the relationship between them had undergone a change; nay, you might have said that their characters were also changed. For Tom found himself pouring out his turbulent heart to Kenelm, confiding to this philosophical scoffer at love all the passionate humanities of love—its hope, its anguish, its jealousy, its wrath—the all that links the gentlest of emotions to tragedy and terror. And Kenelm, listening tenderly, with softened eyes, uttered not one cynic word—nay, not one playful jest. He felt that the gravity of all he heard was too solemn for mockery, too deep even for comfort. True love of this sort was a thing he had

never known, never wished to know, never thought he could know, but he sympathized in it not the less. Strange, indeed, how much we do sympathize, on the stage, for instance, or in a book, with passions that have never agitated ourselves. Had Kenelm jested, or reasoned, or preached, Tom would have shrunk at once into dreary silence; but Kenelm said nothing, save now and then, as he rested his arm, brother-like, on the strong man's shoulder, he murmured, "poor fellow!" So, then, when Tom had finished his confessions, he felt wondrously relieved and comforted. He had cleansed his bosom of the perilous stuff that weighed upon the heart.

Was this good result effected by Kenelm's artful diplomacy, or by that insight into human passions vouchsafed, unconsciously to himself, by gleams or in flashes, to this strange man who surveyed the objects and pursuits of his fellows with a yearning desire to share them, murmuring to himself, "I cannot—I do not stand in this world; like a ghost I glide beside it, and look on?"

Thus the two men continued their way slowly, amid soft pastures and yellowing cornfields, out at length into the dusty thoroughfares of the main road. That gained, their talk insensibly changed its tone—it became more commonplace, and Kenelm permitted himself the licence of those crotchets by which he extracted a sort of quaint pleasantry out of commonplace itself; so that from time to time Tom was startled into the mirth of laughter. This big fellow had one very agreeable gift, which is only granted, I think, to men of genuine character and affectionate dispositions—a spontaneous and sweet laugh, manly and frank, but not boisterous, as you might have supposed it would be. But that sort of laugh had not before come from his lips, since the day on which his love for Jessie Wiles had made him at war with himself and the world.

The sun was setting when from the brow of a hill they beheld the spires of Luscombe, embedded amid the level meadows that stretched below, watered by the same stream that had wound along their more rural pathway, but which now expanded into stately width, and needed, to span it, a mighty bridge fit for the convenience of civilized traffic. The town seemed near, but it was full two miles off by road.

"There is a short cut across the fields beyond that stile, which leads straight to my uncle's house," said Tom; "and I dare say, sir, that you will be glad to escape the dirty suburb by which the road passes before we get into the town."

"A good thought, Tom. It is very odd that fine towns always are approached by dirty suburbs—a covert symbolical satire, perhaps, on the ways to success in fine towns. Avarice or ambition go through very mean little streets before they gain the place which they jostle the crowd to win—in the Townhall or on 'Change. Happy the man who, like you, Tom, finds that there is a shorter and a cleaner and a pleasanter way to goal or to resting-place than that through the dirty suburbs!"

They met but few passengers on their path through the fields—a respectable, staid, elderly couple who had the air of a Dissenting minister and his wife; a girl of fourteen leading a little boy seven years younger by the hand; a pair of lovers, evidently lovers at least to the eye of Tom Bowles—for, on regarding them as they passed unheeding him, he winced, and his face changed. Even after they had passed, Kenelm saw on the face that pain lingered there; the lips were tightly compressed, aud their corners gloomily drawn down.

Just at this moment a dog rushed towards them with a short quick bark—a Pomeranian dog with pointed nose and pricked ears. It hushed its bark as it neared Kenelm, sniffed his trousers, and wagged its tale.

"By the sacred Nine," cried Kenelm, "thou art the dog with the tin tray! where is thy master?"

The dog seemed to understand the question, for it turned its head significantly, and Kenelm saw, seated under a lime-tree, at a good distance from the path, a man, with book in hand, evidently employed in sketching.

"Come this way," he said to Tom; "I recognize an acquaintance. You will like him." Tom desired no new acquaintance at that moment, but he followed Kenelm submissively.

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CHAPTER IX.

"You see we are fated to me again," said Kenelm, stretching himself at his ease beside

the Wandering Minstrel, and motioning Tom to do the same. "But you seem to add the accomplishment of drawing to that of verse-making! You sketch from what you call Nature?"

"From what I call Nature! yes, sometimes."

"And do you not find in drawing, as in verse-making, the truth that I have before sought to din into your reluctant ears—viz., that Nature has no voice except that which man breathes into her out of his mind! I would lay a wager that the sketch you are now taking is rather an attempt to make her embody some thought of your own, than to present her outlines as they appear to any other observer. Permit me to judge for myself." And he bent over the sketch-book. It is often difficult for one who is not himself an artist nor a connoisseur, to judge whether the pencilled jottings in an impromptu sketch are by the hand of a professed master or a mere amateur. Kenelm was neither artist nor connoisseur, but the mere pencil-work seemed to him much what might be expected from any man with an accurate eye, who had taken a certain number of lessons from a good drawing-master. It was enough for him, however, that it furnished an illustration of his own theory. "I was right," he cried, triumphantly. "From this height there is a beautiful view, as it presents itself to me; a beautiful view of the town, its meadows, its river, harmonized by the sunset; for sunset, like gilding, unites conflicting colors, and softens them in uniting. But I see nothing of that view in your sketch. What I do see is to me mysterious."

"The view you suggest," said the minstrel, "is no doubt very fine, but it is for a Turner or a Claude to treat it. My grasp is not wide enough for such a landscape."

"I see indeed in your sketch but one figure, a child."

"Hist! there she stands. Hist! while I put in this last touch."

Kenelm strained his sight, and saw far off a solitary little girl, who was tossing something in the air (he could not distinguish what), and catching it as it fell. She seemed standing on the very verge of the upland, backed by rose-clouds gathered round the setting sun; below lay in confused outlines the great town. In the sketch those outlines seemed infinitely more confused, being only indicated by a few bold strokes; but the figure and face of the child were distinct and lovely. There was an ineffable sentiment in her solitude, there was a depth of quiet enjoyment in her mirthful play, and in her upturned eyes.

"But at that distance," asked Kenelm, when the wanderer had finished his last touch, and, after contemplating it, silently closed his book, and turned round with a genial smile—"but at that distance, how can you distinguish the girl's face? How can you discover that the dim object she has just thrown up and recaught is a ball made of flowers? Do you know the child?"

"I never saw her before this evening; but as I was seated here she was straying around me alone weaving into chains some wild-flowers which she had gathered by the hedgerows yonder, next the highroad; and as she strung them she was chanting to herself some pretty nursery rhymes. You can well understand that when I heard her thus chanting I became interested, and as she came near me I spoke to her, and we soon made friends. She told me she was an orphan, and brought up by a very old man distantly related to her, who had been in some small trade, and now lived in a crowded lane in the heart of the town. He was very kind to her, and being confined himself to the house by age or ailment, he sent her out to play in the fields on summer Sundays. She had no companions of her own age. She said she did not like the other little girls in the lane; and the only little girl she liked at school had a grander station in life, and was not allowed to play with her, so she came out to play alone; and as long as the sun shines and the flowers bloom, she says she never wants other society."

"Tom, do you hear that? As you will be residing in Luscumbe, find out this strange little girl, and be kind to her, Tom, for my sake."

Tom put his large hand upon Kenelm's, making no other answer; but he looked hard at the minstrel, recognized the genial charm of his voice and face, and slid along the grass nearer to him.

The minstrel continued: "While the child was talking to me I mechanically took the flower-chains from her hand, and not thinking what I was about, gathered them up into a ball. Suddenly she saw what I had done, and instead of scolding me for spoiling her pretty

chains, which I richly deserved, was delighted to find I had twisted them into a new plaything. She ran off with the ball, tossing it about till, excited with her own joy, she got to the brow of the hill, and I began my sketch."

"Is that charming face you have drawn like hers?"

"No; only in part. I was thinking of another face while I sketched, but it is not like that either; in fact, it is one of those patchworks which we call 'fancy heads,' and I meant it to be another version of a thought that I had just put into rhyme, when the child came across me."

"May we hear the rhyme?"

"I fear that if it did not bore yourself it would bore your friend."

"I am sure not. Tom, do you sing?"

"Well, I *have* sung," said Tom, hanging his head sheepishly, "and I should like to hear this gentleman."

"But I do not know these verses, just made, well enough to sing them; it is enough if I can recall them well enough to recite." Here the minstrel paused a minute or so as if for recollection, and then, in the sweet clear tones, and the rare purity of enunciation which characterized his utterance, whether in recital or song, gave to the following verses a touching and a varied expression which no one could discover in merely reading them.

THE FLOWER-GIRL BY THE CROSSING.

By the muddy crossing in the crowded streets,
Stands a little maid with her basket full of posies,
Proffering all who pass her choice of knitted sweets,
Tempting Age with heart's-ease, courting Youth with roses.

Age disdains the heart's-ease,
Love rejects the roses;
London life is busy—
Who can stop for posies?

One man is too grave, another is too gay—
This man has his hothouse, that man not a penny;
Flowerets too are common in the month of May,
And the things most common least attract the many.

Ill on London crossings
Fares the sale of posies;
Age disdains the heart's-ease,
Youth rejects the roses.

When the verse-maker had done, he did not pause for approbation, nor look modestly down, as do most people who recite their own verses, but unaffectedly thinking much more of his art than his audience, hurried on somewhat disconsolately—

"I see with great grief that I am better at sketching than rhyming. Can you" (appealing to Kenelm) "even comprehend what I mean by the verses?"

KENELM.—"Do you comprehend, Tom?"

TOM (in a whisper).—"No."

KENELM.—"I presume that by his flower-girl our friend means to represent not only Poetry, but a poetry like his own, which is not at all the sort of poetry now in fashion. I, however, expand his meaning, and by his flower-girl I understand any image of natural truth or beauty for which, when we are living the artificial life of crowded streets, we are too busy to give a penny."

"Take it as you please," said the minstrel, smiling and sighing at the same time; "but I have not expressed in words that which I did mean half so well as I have expressed it in my sketch-book."

"Ah! and how!" asked Kenelm.

"The image of my thought in the sketch, be it Poetry or whatever you prefer to call it, does not stand forlorn in the crowded streets—the child stands on the brow of the green hill, with the city stretched in confused fragments below, and, thoughtless of pennies and passers-by, she is playing with the flowers she has gathered—but in play casting them heavenward, and following them with heavenward eyes."

"Good!" muttered Kenelm—"good!" and then, after a long pause, he added, in a still lower mutter, "Pardon me that remark of mine the other day about a beefsteak. But own that I am right—what you call a sketch from Nature is but a sketch of your own thought."

CHAPTER X.

THE child with the flower-ball had vanished from the brow of the hill; sinking down amid the streets below, the rose-clouds had faded from the horizon; and night was closing round, as the three men entered the thick of the town. Tom pressed Kenelm to accompany him to his uncle's, promising him a hearty welcome and bed and board, but Kenelm declined. He entertained a strong persuasion that it would be better for the desired effect on Tom's mind that he should be left

alone with his relations that night, but proposed that they should spend the next day together, and agreed to call at the veterinary surgeon's in the morning.

When Tom quitted them at his uncle's door, Kenelm said to the minstrel, "I suppose you are going to some inn—may I accompany you? We can sup together, and I should like to hear you talk upon poetry and Nature."

"You flatter me much; but I have friends in the town, with whom I lodge, and they are expecting me. Do you not observe that I have changed my dress? I am not known here as the 'Wandering Minstrel.'"

Kenelm glanced at the man's attire, and for the first time observed the change. It was still picturesque in its way, but it was such as gentlemen of the highest rank frequently wear in the country—the knickerbocker costume—very neat, very new, and complete, to the square-toed shoes with their latchets and buckles.

"I fear," said Kenelm, gravely, "that your change of dress betokens the neighborhood of those pretty girls of whom you spoke in an earlier meeting. According to the Darwinian doctrine of selection, fine plumage goes far in deciding the preference of Jenny Wren and her sex, only we are told that fine-feathered birds are very seldom songsters as well. It is rather unfair to rivals when you unite both attractions."

The minstrel laughed. "There is but one girl in my friend's house—his niece; she is very plain, and only thirteen. But to me the society of women, whether ugly or pretty, is an absolute necessity; and I have been trudging without it for so many days that I can scarcely tell you how my thoughts seemed to shake off the dust of travel when I found myself again in the presence of——"

"Petticoat interest," interrupted Kenelm. "Take care of yourself. My poor friend with whom you found me is a grave warning against petticoat interest, from which I hope to profit. He is passing through a great sorrow; it might have been worse than sorrow. My friend is going to stay in this town. If you are staying here too, pray let him see something of you. It will do him a wondrous good if you can beguile him from this real life into the gardens of poet-land; but do not sing nor talk of love to him."

"I honor all lovers," said the minstrel, with real tenderness in his tone, "and would willingly serve to cheer or comfort your friend, if I could; but I am bound elsewhere, and must leave Luscombe, which I visit on business—money business—the day after to-morrow."

"So, too, must I. At least give us both some hours of your time to-morrow."

"Certainly; from twelve to sunset I shall be roving about—a mere idler. If you will both come with me, it will be a great pleasure to myself. Agreed! Well, then, I will call at your inn to-morrow at twelve; and I recommend for your inn the one facing us—The Golden Lamb. I have heard it recommended for the attributes of civil people and good fare."

Kenelm felt that he here received his *congé*, and well comprehended the fact that the minstrel, desiring to preserve the secret of his name, did not give the address of the family with whom he was a guest.

"But one word more," said Kenelm. "Your host or hostess, if resident here, can, no doubt, from your description of the little girl and the old man her protector, learn the child's address. If so, I should like my companion to make friends with her. Petticoat interest there at least will be innocent and safe. And I know nothing so likely to keep a big, passionate heart like Tom's, now aching with a horrible void, occupied and softened, and turned to directions pure and gentle, as an affectionate interest in a little child."

The minstrel changed color—he even started.

"Sir, are you a wizard that you say that to me?"

"I am not a wizard, but I guess from your question that you have a little child of your own. So much the better; the child may keep you out of much mischief. Remember the little child. Good evening."

Kenelm crossed the threshold of the Golden Lamb, engaged his room, made his ablutions, ordered, and, with his usual zest, partook of his evening meal; and then, feeling the pressure of that melancholic temperament which he so strangely associated with Herculean constitutions, roused himself up, and seeking a distraction from thought, sauntered forth into the gaslit streets.

It was a large, handsome town—handsomer than Tor-Hadham, on account of its site in a

valley surrounded by wooded hills, and watered by the fair stream whose windings we have seen as a brook—handsomer, also, because it boasted a fair cathedral, well cleared to the sight, and surrounded by venerable old houses, the residences of the clergy, or of the quiet lay gentry with mediæval tastes. The main street was thronged with passengers—some soberly returning home from the evening service—some, the younger, lingering in pleasant promenade with their sweethearts or families, or arm in arm with each other, and having the air of bachelors or maidens unattached. Through this street Kenelm passed with inattentive eye. A turn to the right took him towards the cathedral and its surroundings. There all was solitary. The solitude pleased him, and he lingered long, gazing on the noble church lifting its spires and turrets into the deep blue starry air.

Musingly, then, he strayed on, entering a labyrinth of gloomy lanes, in which, though the shops were closed, many a door stood open, with men of the working class lolling against the threshold, idly smoking their pipes, or women seated on the doorsteps gossiping, while noisy children were playing or quarrelling in the kennel. The whole did not present the indolent side of an English Sabbath in the pleasantest and rosiest point of view. Somewhat quickening his steps, he entered a broader street, attracted to it involuntarily by a bright light in the centre. On nearing the light he found that it shone forth from a gin-palace, of which the mahogany doors opened and shut momently, as customers went in and out. It was the handsomest building he had seen in his walk, next to that of the cathedral. "The new civilization *versus* the old," murmured Kenelm. As he so murmured a hand was laid on his arm with a sort of timid impudence. He looked down, and saw a young face, but it had survived the look of youth; it was worn and hard, and the bloom on it was not that of Nature's giving. "Are you kind to-night?" asked a husky voice.

"Kind!" said Kenelm, with mournful tones and softened eyes—"kind! Alas, my poor sister mortal! if pity be kindness, who can see you and not be kind?"

The girl released his arm, and he walked on. She stood some moments gazing after him till out of sight, then she drew her hand suddenly across her eyes, and retracing her steps, was, in her turn, caught hold of by a rougher hand than hers, as she passed the gin-palace. She shook off the grasp with a passionate scorn, and went straight home. Home! is that the right word? Poor sister mortal!

CHAPTER XI.

And now Kenelm found himself at the extremity of the town, and on the banks of the river. Small squalid houses still lined the bank for some way, till, nearing the bridge, they abruptly ceased, and he passed through a broad square again into the main street. On the other side of the street there was a row of villa-like mansions, with gardens stretching towards the river.

All around in the thoroughfare was silent and deserted. By this time the passengers had gone home. The scent of night-flowers from the villa-gardens came sweet on the starlit air. Kenelm paused to inhale it, and then lifting his eyes, hitherto downcast, as are the eyes of men in meditative moods, he beheld, on the balcony of the nearest villa, a group of well-dressed persons. The balcony was unusually wide and spacious. On it was a small round table, on which were placed wine and fruits. Three ladies were seated round the table on wire-work chairs, and on the side nearest Kenelm, one man. In that man, now slightly turning his profile, as if to look towards the river, Kenelm recognized the minstrel. He was still in his picturesque knickerbocker dress, and his clear-cut features, with the clustering curls of hair, and Rubens-like hue and shape of beard, had more than their usual beauty, softened in the light of skies, to which the moon, just risen, added deeper and fuller radiance. The ladies were in evening dress, but Kenelm could not distinguish their faces, hidden behind the minstrel. He moved softly across the street, and took his stand behind a buttress in the low wall of the garden, from which he could have full view of the balcony, unseen himself. In this watch he had no other object than that of a vague pleasure. The whole grouping had in it a kind of scenic romance, and he stopped as one stops before a picture.

He then saw that of the three ladies one was

old; another was a slight girl, of the age of twelve or thirteen; the third appeared to be somewhere about seven or eight and twenty. She was dressed with more elegance than the others. On her neck, only partially veiled by a thin scarf, there was the glitter of jewels; and, as she now turned her full face towards the moon, Kenelm saw that she was very handsome—a striking kind of beauty, calculated to fascinate a poet or an artist—not unlike Raffaele's Fornarina, dark, with warm tints.

Now there appeared at the open window a stout, burly, middle-aged gentleman, looking every inch of him a family man, a moneyed man, sleek and prosperous. He was bald, fresh-colored, and with light whiskers.

"Holloa," he said, in an accent very slightly foreign, and with a loud clear voice, which Kenelm heard distinctly, "Is it not time for you to come in?"

"Don't be so tiresome, Fritz," said the handsome lady, half-petulantly, half-playfully, in the way ladies address the tiresome spouses they lord it over. "Your friend has been sulking the whole evening, and it is only just beginning to be pleasant as the moon rises."

"The moon has a good effect on poets and other mad folks, I dare say," said the bald man with a good-humored laugh. "But I can't have my little niece laid up again just as she is on the mend—Annie, come in."

The girl obeyed reluctantly. The old lady rose too.

"Ah, mother, you are wise," said the bald man; "and a game at *euchre* is safer than poetizing in the night air." He wound his arm round the old lady with a careful fondness, for she moved with some difficulty as if rather lame. "As for you two sentimentalists and moongazers, I give you ten minutes' law—not more, mind."

"Tyrant!" said the minstrel.

The balcony now held only two forms—the minstrel and the handsome lady. The window was closed, and partially veiled by muslin draperies, but Kenelm caught glimpses of the room within. He could see that the room, lit by a lamp on the centre table, and candles elsewhere, was decorated and fitted up with cost, and in a taste not English. He could see, for instance, that the ceiling was painted, and the walls were not papered, but painted in panels between arabesque pilasters.

"They are foreigners," thought Kenelm, "though the man does speak English so well. That accounts for playing *euchre* of a Sunday evening, as if there were no harm in it. *Euchre* is an American game. The man is called Fritz. Ah! I guess—Germans who have lived a good deal in America; and the verse-maker said he was at Luscombe on pecuniary business. Doubtless his host is a merchant, and the verse-maker in some commercial firm. That accounts for his concealment of name, and fear of its being known that he was addicted, in his holiday, to tastes and habits so opposed to his calling."

While he was thus thinking, the lady had drawn her chair close to the minstrel, and was speaking to him with evident earnestness, but in tones too low for Kenelm to hear. Still it seemed to him, by her manner and by the man's look, as if she were speaking in some sort of reproach, which he sought to deprecate. Then he spoke, also in a whisper, and she averted her face for a moment—then she held out her hand, and the minstrel kissed it. Certainly, thus seen, the two might well be taken for lovers; and the soft night, the fragrance of the flowers, silence and solitude, stars and moonlight, all girt them as with an atmosphere of love. Presently the man rose and leaned over the balcony, propping his cheek on his hand, and gazing on the river. The lady rose too, and also leaned over the balustrade, her dark hair almost touching the auburn locks of her companion.

Kenelm sighed. Was it from envy, from pity, from fear? I know not; but he sighed.

After a brief pause, the lady said, still in low tones, but not too low this time to escape Kenelm's fine sense of hearing—

"Tell me those verses again. I must remember every word of them when you are gone."

The man shook his head gently, and answered, but inaudibly.

"Do," said the lady, "set them to music later; and the next time you come I will sing them. I have thought of a title for them."

"What?" asked the minstrel.

"Love's Quarrel."

The minstrel turned his head, and their eyes met, and, in meeting, lingered long. Then he

moved away, and with face turned from her and towards the river, gave the melody of his wondrous voice to the following lines:—

LOVE'S QUARREL.

Standing by the river, gazing on the river,
  See it paved with starbeams; heaven is at our feet.
Now the wave is troubled, now the rushes quiver;
  Vanished is the starlight—it was a deceit.

Comes a little cloudlet 'twixt ourselves and heaven,
  And from all the river fades the silver track;
Put thine arms around me, whisper low "Forgiven!"—
  See how on the river starlight settles back.

When he had finished, still with face turned aside, the lady did not, indeed, whisper "forgiven," nor put her arms around him; but, as if by irresistible impulse, she laid her hand lightly on his shoulder.

The minstrel started.

There came to his ear—he knew not from whence, from whom—

"Mischief—mischief! Remember the little child!"

"Hush!" he said, staring round. "Did you not hear a voice?"

"Only yours," said the lady.

"It was our guardian angel's, Amalie. It came in time. We will go within."

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CHAPTER XII.

The next morning betimes, Kenelm visited Tom at his uncle's home. A comfortable and respectable home it was, like that of an owner in easy circumstances. The veterinary surgeon himself was intelligent, and apparently educated beyond the range of his calling; a childless widower, between sixty and seventy, living with a sister, an old maid. They were evidently much attached to Tom, and delighted by the hope of keeping him with them. Tom himself looked rather sad, but not sullen, and his face brightened wonderfully at first sight of Kenelm. That oddity made himself as pleasant and as much like other people as he could in conversing with the old widower and the old maid, and took leave, engaging Tom to be at his inn at half-past twelve, and spend the day with him and the minstrel. He then returned to the Golden Lamb, and waited there for his first visitant, the minstrel.

That votary of the muse arrived punctually at twelve o'clock. His countenance was less cheerful and sunny than usual. Kenelm made no allusion to the scene he had witnessed, nor did his visitor seem to suspect that Kenelm had witnessed it, or been the utterer of that warning voice.

Kenelm.—"I have asked my friend Tom Bowles to come a little later, because I wished you to be of use to him, and in order to be so, I should suggest how:——"

The Minstrel.—"Pray do."

Kenelm.—"You know that I am not a poet, and I do not have much reverence for verse-making, merely as a craft."

The Minstrel.—"Neither have I."

Kenelm.—"But I have a great reverence for poetry as a priesthood. I felt that reverence for you when you sketched and talked priesthood last evening, and placed in my heart—I hope for ever while it beats—the image of the child on the sunlit hill, high above the abodes of men, tossing her flower-ball heavenward, and with heavenward eyes."

The singer's cheek colored high, and his lip quivered; he was very sensitive to praise—most singers are.

Kenelm resumed, "I have been educated in the Realistic school, and with realism I am discontented, because in realism as a school there is no truth. It contains but a bit of truth, and that the coldest and hardest bit of it, and he who utters a bit of truth and suppresses the rest of it, tells a lie."

The Minstrel (slyly).—"Does the critic who says to me, 'Sing of beefsteak, because the appetite for food is a real want of daily life, and don't sing of art and glory and love, because in daily life a man may do without such ideas,'—tell a lie?"

Kenelm.—"Thank you for that rebuke. I submit to it. No doubt I did tell a lie—that is, if I were quite in earnest in my recommendation; and if not in earnest, why——"

The Minstrel.—"You belied yourself."

Kenelm.—"Very likely. I set out on my travels to escape from shams, and begin to discover that I am a sham *par excellence*. But I suddenly come across you, as a boy dulled by his syntax and his vulgar fractions suddenly comes across a pleasant poem or a picture-book, and feels his wits brighten up. I owe you much; you have done me a world of good."

"I cannot guess how."

"Possibly not, but you have shown me how the realism of Nature herself takes color and life and soul when seen on the ideal or poetic side of it. It is not exactly the words that you say or sing that do me the good, but they awaken within me new trains of thought, which I seek to follow out. The best teacher is the one who suggests rather than dogmatizes, and inspires his listener with the wish to teach himself. Therefore, O singer! whatever be the worth in critical eyes of your songs, I am glad to remember that you would like to go through the world always singing."

"Pardon me; you forget that I added, 'if life were always young, and the seasons were always summer.'"

"I do not forget. But if youth and summer fade for you, you leave youth and summer behind you as you pass along—behind in hearts which mere realism would make always old, and counting their slothful beats under the gray of a sky without sun or stars; wherefore I pray you to consider how magnificent a mission the singer's is—to harmonize your life with your song, and toss your flowers, as your child does, heavenward, with heavenward eyes. Think only of this when you talk with my sorrowing friend, and you will do him good, as you have done me, without being able to guess how a seeker after the Beautiful, such as you, carries us along with him on his way; so that we, too, look out for beauty, and see it in the wildflowers to which we had been blind before."

Here Tom entered the little sanded parlor where this dialogue had been held, and the three men sallied forth, taking the shortest cut from the town into the fields and woodlands.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHETHER or not his spirits were raised by Kenelm's praise and exhortations, the minstrel that day talked with a charm that spell-bound Tom, and Kenelm was satisfied with brief remarks on his side tending to draw out the principal performer.

The talk was drawn from outward things, from natural objects—objects that interest children, and men who, like Tom Bowles, have been accustomed to view surroundings more with the heart's eye than the mind's eye. This rover about the country knew much of the habits of birds and beasts and insects, and told ancedotes of them with a mixture of humor and pathos, which fascinated Tom's attention, made him laugh heartily, and sometimes brought tears into his big blue eyes.

They dined at an inn by the wayside, and the dinner was mirthful; then they wended their way slowly back. By the declining daylight their talk grew somewhat graver, and Kenelm took more part in it. Tom listened mute—still fascinated. At length, as the town came in sight, they agreed to halt awhile, in a bosky nook soft with mosses and sweet with wild thyme.

There, as they lay stretched at their ease, the birds hymning vesper songs amid the boughs above, or dropping, noiseless and fearless, for their evening food on the swards around them, the wanderer said to Kenelm—"You tell me that you are no poet, yet I am sure you have a poet's perception; you must have written poetry?"

"Not I; as I before told you, only school verses in dead languages; but I found in my knapsack this morning a copy of some rhymes, made by a fellow-collegian, which I put into my pocket, meaning to read them to you both. They are not verses like yours, which evidently burst from you spontaneously, and are not imitated from any other poets. These verses were written by a Scotchman, and smack of imitation from the old ballad style. There is little to admire in the words themselves, but there is something in the idea which struck me as original, and impressed me sufficiently to keep a copy, and somehow or other it got into the leaves of one of the two books I carried with me from home."

"What are those books? Books of poetry both, I will venture to wager——"

"Wrong! Both metaphysical, and dry as a bone. Tom, light your pipe, and you, sir, lean more at ease on your elbow; I should warn you that the ballad is long. Patience!"

"Attention!" said the minstrel.

"Fire!" added Tom.

Kenelm began to read—and he read well—

LORD RONALD'S BRIDE.

PART I.

"WHY gathers the crowd in the Market-place
Ere the stars have yet left the sky?"
"For a holiday show and an act of grace—
At the sunrise a witch shall die."

"What deed has she done to deserve that doom—
Has she blighted the standing corn,
Or rifled for philtres a dead man's tomb,
Or rid mothers of babes new-born?"

"Her pact with the Fiend was not thus revealed,
She taught sinners the Word to hear;
The hungry she fed, and the sick she healed,
And was held as a Saint last year.

"But a holy man, who at Rome had been,
Had discovered, by book and bell,
That the marvels she wrought were through arts unclean,
And the lies of the Prince of Hell.

"And our Mother the Church, for the dame was rich,
And her husband was Lord of Clyde,
Would fain have been mild to this saint-like witch
If her sins she had not denied.

"But hush, and come nearer to see the sight,
Sheriff, halberds, and torchmen—look!
That's the witch, standing mute in her garb of white,
By the priest with his bell and book."

So the witch was consumed on the sacred pyre
And the priest grew in power and pride,
And the witch left a son to succeed his sire
In the halls and the lands of Clyde.

And the infant waxed comely and strong and brave,
But his manhood had scarce begun,
When his vessel was launched on the northern wave,
To the shores which are near the sun.

PART II.

Lord Ronald has come to his halls in Clyde
With a bride of some unknown race:
Compared with the man who would kiss that bride
Wallace wight were a coward base.

Her eyes had the glare of the mountain-cat
When it springs on the hunter's spear;
At the head of the board when that lady sate
Hungry men could not eat for fear.

And the tones of her voice had the deadly growl
Of the bloodhound that scents its prey;
No storm was so dark as that lady's scowl
Under tresses of wintry gray.

"Lord Ronald! men marry for love or gold,
Mickle rich must have been thy bride!"
"Man's heart may be bought, woman's hand be sold,
On the banks of our northern Clyde.

"My bride is, in sooth, mickle rich to me
Though she brought not a groat in dower,
For her face, couldst thou see it as I do see,
Is the fairest in hall or bower!"

Quoth the bishop one day to our lord the king,
"Satan reigns on the Clyde alway,
And the taint in the blood of the witch doth cling
To the child that she brought to-day.

"Lord Ronald hath come from the Paynim land
With a bride that appals the sight;
Like his dam she hath moles on her dread right hand,
And she turns to a snake at night.

"It is plain that a Scot who can blindly dote
On the face of an Eastern ghoul,
And a ghoul who was worth not a silver groat,
Is a Scot who has lost his soul.

"It were wise to have done with this demon tree
Which has teemed with such cankered fruit:
Add the soil where it stands to my holy See,
And consign to the flames its root."

"Holy man!" quoth King James, and he laughed, "we know
That thy tongue never wags in vain,
But the Church cist is full, and the king's is low,
And the Clyde is a fair domain.

"Yet a knight that's bewitched by a laidly fere
Needs not much to dissolve the spell;
We will summon the bride and the bridegoom here,
Be at hand with thy book and bell."

PART III.

Lord Ronald stood up in King James's court,
And his dame by his dauntless side;
The barons who came in the hopes of sport
Shook with fright when they saw the bride.

The bishop, though armed with his bell and book,
Grew as white as if turned to stone,
It was only our king who could face that look,
But he spoke with a trembling tone:

"Lord Ronald, the knights of thy race and mine
Should have mates in their own degree;
What parentage, say, hath that bride of thine
Who hath come from the far countree?

"And what was her dowry in gold or land,
Or what was the charm, I pray,
That a comely young gallant should woo the hand
Of the ladye we see to-day?

And the lords would have laughed, but that awful dame
Struck them dumb with her thunder-frown:
"Saucy king, did I utter my father's name,
Thou wouldst kneel as his liegeman down.

"Though I brought to Lord Ronald nor lands nor gold,
Nor the bloom of a fading cheek;
Yet, were I a widow, both young and old
Would my hand and my dowry seek.

"For the wish that he covets the most below,
And would hide from the saints above,
Which he dares not to pray for in weal or woe,
Is the dowry I bring my love.

"Let every man look in his heart and see
What the wish he most lusts to win,
And then let him fasten his eyes on me
While he thinks of his darling sin."

And every man,—bishop, and lord, and king,—
Thought of that he most wished to win,
And, fixing his eye on that gruesome thing,
He beheld his own darling sin.

No longer a ghoul in that face he saw,
It was fair as a boy's first love;
The voice which had curdled his veins with awe
Was the coo of the woodland dove.

Each heart was on flame for the peerless dame
At the price of the husband's life;
Bright claymores flash out, and loud voices shout
"In thy widow shall be my wife."

Then darkness fell over the palace hall,
More dark and more dark it fell,
And a death-groan boomed hoarse underneath the pall,
And was drowned amid roar and yell.

When Light through the lattice-pane stole once more,
It was gray as a wintry dawn,
And the bishop lay cold on the regal floor,
With a stain on his robes of lawn.

Lord Ronald was standing beside the dead,
In the scabbard he plunged his sword,
And with visage as wan as the corpse, he said,
"Lo! my ladye hath kept her word."

"Now I leave her to others to woo and win,
For no longer I find her fair;
Could I look on the face of my darling sin,
I should see but a dead man's there.

"And the dowry she brought me is here returned,
For the wish of my heart has died,
It is quenched in the blood of the priest who burned,
My sweet mother, the Saint of Clyde."

Lord Ronald strode over the stony floor,
Not a hand was outstretched to stay;
Lord Ronald has passed through the gaping door,
Not an eye ever traced his way.

And the ladye, left widowed, was prized above
All the maidens in hall and bower,
Many bartered their lives for that ladye's love,
And their souls for that ladye's dower.

God grant that the wish which I dare not pray
Be not that which I lust to win,
And that ever I look with my first dismay
On the face of my darling sin!

As he ceased, Kenelm's eye fell on Tom's face upturned to his own, with open lips, and intent stare, and paled cheeks, and a look of that higher sort of terror which belongs to awe. The man, then recovering himself, tried to speak, and attempted a sickly smile, but neither would do. He rose abruptly and walked away, crept under the shadow of a dark beech-tree, and stood there leaning against the trunk.

"What say you to the ballad?" asked Kenelm of the singer.

"It is not without power," answered he.

"Ay, of a certain kind."

The minstrel looked hard at Kenelm, and dropped his eyes with a heightened glow on his cheek.

"The Scotch are a thoughtful race. The Scot who wrote this thing may have thought of a day when he saw beauty in the face of a darling sin; but if so, it is evident that his sight recovered from that glamory. Shall we walk on? Come, Tom."

The minstrel left them at the entrance of the town, saying, "I regret that I cannot see more of either of you, as I quit Luscombe at daybreak. Here, by-the-by, I forgot to give it before, is the address you wanted."

KENELM.—"Of the little child. I am glad you remembered her."

The minstrel again looked hard at Kenelm, this time without dropping his eyes. Kenelm's expression of face was so simply quiet that it might be almost called vacant.

Kenelm and Tom continued to walk on towards the veterinary surgeon's house, for some minutes silently. Then Tom said in a whisper, "Did not you mean those rhymes to hit me here—*here*," and he struck his breast.

"The rhymes were written long before I saw you, Tom; but it is well if their meaning strike us all. Of you, my friend, I have no fear now. Are you not already a changed man?"

"I feel as if I were going through a change," answered Tom, in slow, dreary accents. "In hearing you and that gentleman talk so much of things that I never thought of, I felt something in me—you will laugh when I tell you—something like a bird."

"Like a bird—good!—a bird has wings."

"Just so."

"And you felt wings that you were unconscious of before, fluttering and beating themselves as against the wires of a cage. You were true to your instincts then, my dear fellowman—instincts of space and heaven. Courage!—the cage-door will open soon. And now, practically speaking, I give you this advice in parting: you have a quick and sensitive mind which you have allowed that strong body of yours to incarcerate and suppress. Give that mind fair play. Attend to the business of your calling diligently: the craving for regular work is the healthful appetite of mind; but in your spare hours cultivate the new ideas which your talk with men who have been accustomed to cultivate the mind more than the body, has sown within you. Belong to a book-club, and interest yourself in books. A wise man has said, 'Books widen the present by adding to it the past and the future.' Seek the company of educated men and educated women too; and when you are angry with another, reason with

him—don't knock him down; and don't be knocked down yourself by an enemy much stronger than yourself—Drink. Do all this, and when I see you again you will be——"

"Stop, sir—you will see me again?"

"Yes, if we both live, I promise it."

"When?"

"You see, Tom, we have both of us something in our old selves which we must work off. You will work off your something by repose, and I must work off mine, if I can, by moving about. So I am on my travels. May we both have new selves better than the old selves, when we again shake hands. For your part try your best, dear Tom, and Heaven prosper you."

"And Heaven bless you!" cried Tom, fervently, with tears rolling unheeded from his bold blue eyes.

CHAPTER XIV.

Though Kenelm left Luscombe on Tuesday morning, he did not appear at Neesdale Park till the Wednesday, a little before the dressing-bell for dinner. His adventures in the interim are not worth repeating. He had hoped he might fall in again with the minstrel, but he did not.

His portmanteau had arrived, and he heaved a sigh as he cased himself in a gentleman's evening dress, "Alas! I have soon got back again into my own skin."

There were several other guests in the house, though not a large party. They had been asked with an eye to the approaching election, consisting of squires and clergy from remoter parts of the county. Chief among the guests in rank and importance, and rendered by the occasion the central object of interest, was George Belvoir.

Kenelm bore his part in this society with a resignation that partook of repentance.

The first day he spoke very little, and was considered a very dull young man by the lady he took in to dinner. Mr. Travers in vain tried to draw him out. He had anticipated much amusement from the eccentricities of his guest, who had talked volubly enough in the fernery, and was sadly disappointed. "I feel," he whispered to Mrs. Campion, "like poor Lord Pomfret, who, charmed with Punch's lively conversation, bought him, and was greatly surprised that, when he had once brought him home, Punch would not talk."

"But your Punch listens," said Mrs. Campion, "and he observes."

George Belvoir, on the other hand, was universally declared to be very agreeable. Though not naturally jovial, he forced himself to appear so—laughing loud with the squires, and entering heartily with their wives and daughters into such topics as county-balls and croquet-parties; and when after dinner he had, Cato-like, 'warmed his virtue with wine,' the virtue came out very lustily in praise of good men—viz., men of his own party,—and anathema on bad men—viz., men of the other party.

Now and then he appealed to Kenelm, and Kenelm always returned the same answer, "There is much in what you say."

The first evening closed in the usual way in country-houses. There was some lounging under moonlight on the terrace before the house; then there was some singing by young lady amateurs, and a rubber of whist for the elders; then wine-and-water, hand-candlesticks, a smoking room for those who smoked, and bed for those who did not.

In the course of the evening, Cecilia, partly in obedience to the duties of hostess, and partly from that compassion for shyness which kindly and high-bred persons entertain, had gone a little out of her way to allure Kenelm forth from the estranged solitude he had contrived to weave around him; in vain for the daughter as for the father. He replied to her with the quiet self-possession which should have convinced her that no man on earth was less entitled to indulgence for the gentlemanlike infirmity of shyness, and no man less needed the duties of any hostess for the augmentation of his comforts, or rather for his diminished sense of discomfort; but his replies were in monosyllables, and made with the air of a man who says in his heart, "If this creature would but leave me alone!"

Cecilia, for the first time in her life, was piqued, and, strange to say, began to feel more interest about this indifferent stranger than about the popular, animated, pleasant George Belvoir, whom she knew by womanly instinct was as much in love with her as he could be.

Cecilia Travers that night on retiring to rest told her maid, smilingly, that she was too tired to have her hair done; and yet, when the maid was dismissed, she looked at herself in the glass more gravely and more discontentedly than she had ever looked there before; and, tired though she was, stood at the window gazing into the moonlit night for a good hour after the maid had left her.

CHAPTER XV.

Kenelm Chillingly has now been several days a guest at Neesdale Park. He has recovered speech; the other guests have gone, including George Belvoir. Leopold Travers has taken a great fancy to Kenelm. Leopold was one of those men, not uncommon perhaps in England, who, with great mental energies, have little book-knowledge, and when they come in contact with a book-reader who is not a pedant, feel a pleasant excitement in his society, a source of interest in comparing notes with him, a constant surprise in finding by what venerable authorities the deductions which their own mother-wit has drawn from life are supported; or by what cogent arguments, derived from books, those deductions are contravened or upset. Leopold Travers had in him that sense of humor which generally accompanies a strong practical understanding (no man, for instance, has more practical understanding than a Scot, and no man has a keener susceptibility to humor), and not only enjoyed Kenelm's odd way of expressing himself, but very often mistook Kenelm's irony for opinion spoken in earnest.

Since his early removal from the capital and his devotion to agricultural pursuits, it was so seldom that Leopold Travers met a man by whose conversation his mind was diverted to other subjects than those which were incidental to the commonplace routine of his life, that he found in Kenelm's views of men and things a source of novel amusement, and a stirring appeal to such metaphysical creeds of his own as had been formed unconsciously, and had long reposed unexamined in the recesses of an intellect shrewd and strong, but more accustomed to dictate than to argue. Kenelm, on his side, saw much in his host to like and to admire; but, reversing their relative positions in point of years, he conversed with Travers as with a mind younger than his own. Indeed, it was one of his crotchety theories that each generation is in substance mentally older than the generation preceding it, especially in all that relates to science; and, as he would say, "The study of life is a science, and not an art."

But Cecilia,—what impression did she create upon the young visitor? Was he alive to the charms of her rare beauty, to the grace of a mind sufficiently stored for commune with those who love to think and to imagine, and yet sufficiently feminine and playful to seize the sportive side of realities, and allow their proper place to the trifles which make the sum of human things? An impression she did make, and that impression was new to him and pleasing. Nay, sometimes in her presence, and sometimes when alone, he fell into abstracted consultations with himself, saying, "Kenelm Chillingly, now that thou hast got back into thy proper skin, dost thou not think that thou hadst better remain there? Couldst thou not be contented with thy lot as erring descendant of Adam, if thou couldst win for thy mate so faultless a descendant of Eve as now flits before thee?" But he could not abstract from himself any satisfactory answer to the questions he had addressed to himself.

Once he said abruptly to Travers as, on their return from their rambles, they caught a glimpse of Cecilia's light form bending over the flower-beds on the lawn, "Do you admire Virgil?"

"To say truth I have not read Virgil since I was a boy; and, between you and me, I then thought him rather monotonous."

"Perhaps because his verse is so smooth in its beauty?"

"Probably. When one is very young one's taste is faulty; and if a poet is not faulty, we are apt to think he wants vivacity and fire."

"Thank you for your lucid explanation," answered Kenelm, adding musingly to himself, "I am afraid I should yawn very often if I were married to a Miss Virgil."

CHAPTER XVI.

The house of Mr. Travers contained a considerable collection of family portraits, few of

them well painted, but the Squire was evidently proud of such evidences of ancestry. They not only occupied a considerable space on the walls of the reception rooms, but swarmed into the principal sleeping chambers, and smiled or frowned on the beholder from dark passages and remote lobbies. One morning Cecilia, on her way to the China Closet, found Kenelm gazing very intently upon a female portrait consigned to one of these obscure receptacles by which through a back staircase he gained the only approach from the hall to his chamber.

"I don't pretend to be a god judge of paintings," said Kenelm, as Cecilia paused beside him; "but it strikes me that this picture is very much better than most of those to which places of honor are assigned in your collection. And the face itself is so lovely, that it would add an embellishment to the princeliest galleries."

"Yes," said Cecilia, with a half-sigh. "The face is lovely, and the portrait is considered one of Lely's rarest master-pieces. It used to hang over the chimney-piece in the drawing-room. My father had it placed here many years ago."

"Perhaps because he discovered it was not a family portrait?"

"On the contrary—because it grieves him to think it is a family portrait. Hush! I hear his footstep; don't speak of it to him; don't let him see you looking at it. The subject is very painful to him."

Here Cecilia vanished into the China Closet, and Kenelm turned off to his own room.

What sin committed by the original in the time of Charles II., but only discovered in the reign of Victoria, could have justified Leopold Travers in removing the most pleasing portrait in the house from the honored place it had occupied, and banishing it to so obscure a recess? Kenelm said no more on the subject, and indeed an hour afterwards had dismissed it from his thoughts. The next day he rode out with Travers and Cecilia. Their way passed through quiet shady lanes without any purposed direction, when suddenly, at the spot where three of those lanes met on an angle of common ground, a lonely gray tower, in the midst of a wide space of grass land which looked as if it had once been a park, with huge boles of pollarded oak dotting the space here and there, rose before them.

"Cissy!" cried Travers, angrily reining in his horse and stopping short in a political discussion which he had forced upon Kenelm—"Cissy! How comes this! We have taken the wrong turn! No matter, I see there," pointing to the right, "the chimney-pots of old Mondell's homestead. He has not yet promised his vote to George Belvoir. I'll go and have a talk with him. Turn back, you and Mr. Chillingly—meet me at Terner's Green, and wait for me there till I come. I need not excuse myself to you, Chillingly. A vote is a vote." So saying, the Squire, whose ordinary riding-norse was an old hunter, halted, turned, and, no gate being visible, put the horse over a stiff fence and vanished in the direction of old Mondell's chimney-pots. Kenelm, scarcely hearing his host's instructions to Cecilia and excuses to himself, remained still and gazing on the old gray tower thus abruptly obtruded on his view.

Though no learned antiquarian like his father, Kenelm had a strange fascinating interest in all relics of the past; and old gray towers, where they are not church towers, are very rarely to be seen in England. All around the old gray tower spoke with an unutterable mournfulness of a past in ruins: you could see remains of some large Gothic building once attached to it, rising here and there in fragments of deeply-buttressed walls; you could see in a dry ditch, between high ridges, where there had been a fortified moat: nay, you could even see where once had been the bailey hill from which a baron of old had dispensed justice. Seldom indeed does the most acute of antiquarians discover that remnant of Norman times on lands still held by the oldest of Anglo-Norman families. Then, the wild nature of the demesne around; those ranges of sward, with those old giant oak-trunks, hollowed within and pollarded at top; all spoke, in unison with the gray tower, of a past as remote from the reign of Victoria as the Pyramids are from the sway of the Viceroy of Egypt.

"Let us turn back," said Miss Travers; "my father would not like me to stay here."

"Pardon me a moment. I wish my father were here; he would stay till sunset. But what is the history of that old tower?—a history it must have."

"Every home has a history—even a peas-

ant's hut," said Cecilia. "But do pardon me if I ask you to comply with my father's request. I at least must turn back."

Thus commanded, Kenelm reluctantly withdrew his gaze from the ruin and regained Cecilia, who was already some paces in return down the lane.

"I am far from a very inquisitive man by temperament," said Kenelm, "so far as the affairs of the living are concerned. But I should not care to open a book if I had no interest in the past. Pray indulge my curiosity to learn something about that old tower. It could not look more melancholy and solitary if I had built it myself."

"Its most melancholy associations are with a very recent past," answered Cecilia. "The tower, in remote times, formed the keep of a castle belonging to the most ancient and once the most powerful family in these parts. The owners were barons who took active share in the Wars of the Roses. The last of them sided with Richard III., and after the battle of Bosworth the title was attainted, and the larger portion of the lands were confiscated. Loyalty to a Plantagenet was of course treason to a Tudor. But the regeneration of the family rested with their direct descendants, who had saved from the general wreck of their fortunes what may be called a good squire's estate—about, perhaps, the same rental as my father's, but of much larger acreage. These squires, however, were more looked up to in the county than the wealthiest peer. They were still by far the oldest family in the county; and traced in their pedigree alliances with the most illustrious houses in English history. In themselves too, for many generations, they were a high-spirited, hospitable, popular race, living unostentatiously on their income, and contented with their rank as squires. The castle—ruined by time and siege—they did not attempt to restore. They dwelt in a house near to it, built about Elizabeth's time, which you could not see, for it lies in a hollow behind the tower—a moderate-sized, picturesque, country gentleman's house. Our family intermarried with them. The portrait you saw was a daughter of their house. And very proud was any squire in the county of intermarriage with the Fletwodes."

"Fletwode—that was their name? I have a vague recollection of having heard the name connected with some disastrous—oh, but it can't be the same family—pray go on."

"I fear it is the same family. But I will finish the story as I have heard it. The property descended at last to one Bertram Fletwode, who, unfortunately, obtained the reputation of being a very clever man of business. There was some mining company in which, with other gentlemen in the county, he took great interest; invested largely in shares; became the head of the direction——"

"I see; and was, of course, ruined."

"No; worse than that, he became very rich; and, unhappily, became desirous of being richer still. I have heard that there was a great mania for speculations just about that time. He embarked in these, and prospered, till at last he was induced to invest a large share of the fortune thus acquired in the partnership of a bank, which enjoyed a high character. Up to that time he had retained popularity and esteem in the county; but the squires who shared in the adventures of the mining company, and knew little or nothing about other speculations in which his name did not appear, professed to be shocked at the idea of a Fletwode, of Fletwode, being ostensibly joined in partnership with a Jones, of Clapham, in a London bank."

"Slow folks, those country squires,—behind the progress of the age. Well?"

"I have heard that Bertram Fletwode was himself very reluctant to take this step, but was persuaded to do so by his son. This son, Alfred, was said to have still greater talents for business than the father, and had been not only associated with but consulted by him in all the later speculations which had proved so fortunate. Mrs. Campion knew Alfred Fletwode very well. She describes him as handsome, with quick, eager eyes; showy and imposing in his talk; immensely ambitious—more ambitious than avaricious,—collecting money less for its own sake than for that which it could give—rank, and power. According to her it was the dearest wish of his heart to claim the old barony, but not before there could go with the barony a fortune adequate to the lustre of a title so ancient, and equal to the wealth of modern peers with higher nominal rank."

"A poor ambition at the best; of the two I should prefer that of a poet in a garret. But

I am no judge. Thank heaven I have no ambition. Still, all ambition, all desire to rise, is interesting to him who is ignominiously contented if he does not fall. So the son had his way, and Fletwode joined company with Jones on the road to wealth and the peerage? —meanwhile, did the son marry? if so, of course the daughter of a duke or a millionnaire. Tuft-hunting, or money-making, at the risk of degradation and the workhouse. Progress of the age!"

"No," replied Cecilia, smiling at this outburst, but smiling sadly, "Fletwode did not marry the daughter of a duke or a millionnaire; but still his wife belonged to a noble family—very poor, but very proud. Perhaps he married from motives of ambition, though not of gain. Her father was of much political influence that might perhaps assist his claim to the barony. The mother, a woman of the world; enjoying a high social position, and nearly related to a connection of ours—Lady Glenalvon."

"Lady Glenalvon, the dearest of my lady friends! You are connected with her?"

"Yes; Lord Glenalvon was my mother's uncle. But I wish to finish my story before my father joins us. Alfred Fletwode did not marry till long after the partnership in the bank. His father, at his desire, had bought up the whole business,—Mr. Jones having died. The bank was carried on in the names of Fletwode and Son. But the father had become merely a nominal or what I believe is called a 'sleeping' partner. He had long ceased to reside in the county. The old house was not grand enough for him. He had purchased a palatial residence in one of the home counties; lived there in great splendor; was a munificent patron of science and art; and in spite of his earlier addiction to business-like speculations he appears to have been a singularly accomplished, high-bred gentleman. Some years before his son's marriage, Mr. Fletwode had been afflicted with partial paralysis, and his medical attendant enjoined rigid abstention from business. From that time he never interfered with his son's management of the bank. He had an only daughter, much younger than Alfred. Lord Eagleton, my mother's brother, was engaged to be married to her. The wedding-day was fixed—when the world was startled by the news that the great firm of Fletwode and Son had stopped payment,—is that the right phrase?"

"I believe so."

"A great many people were ruined in that failure. The public indignation was very great. Of course all the Fletwode property went to the creditors. Old Mr. Fletwode was legally acquitted of all other offence than that of over-confidence in his son. Alfred was convicted of fraud—of forgery. I don't, of course, know the particulars—they are very complicated. He was sentenced to a long term of servitude, but died the day he was condemned—apparently by poison, which he had long secreted about his person. Now you can understand why my father, who is almost gratuitously sensitive on the point of honor, removed into a corner the portrait of Arabella Fletwode,—his own ancestress, but also the ancestress of a convicted felon,—you can understand why the whole subject is so painful to him. His wife's brother was to have married the felon's sister; and though, of course, that marriage was tacitly broken off by the terrible disgrace that had befallen the Fletwodes, yet I don't think my poor uncle ever recovered the blow to his hopes. He went abroad, and died in Madeira, of a slow decline."

"And the felon's sister, did she die too?"

"No; not that I know of. Mrs. Campion says that she saw in a newspaper the announcement of old Mr. Fletwode's death, and a paragraph to the effect that after that event Miss Fletwode had sailed from Liverpool for New York."

"Alfred Fletwode's wife went back, of course, to her family?"

"Alas! no,—poor thing! She had not been many months married when the bank broke; and among his friends her wretched husband appears to have forged the names of the trustees to her marriage settlement, and sold out the sums which would otherwise have served her as a competence. Her father, too, was a great sufferer by the bankruptcy, having by his son-in-law's advice placed a considerable portion of his moderate fortune in Alfred's hands for investment, all of which was involved in the general wreck. I am afraid he was a very hard-hearted man; at all events his poor daughter never returned to him. She died, I think, even before the death of Bertram Fletwode. The whole story is very dismal."

"Dismal indeed, but pregnant with salutary warning to those who live in an age of progress.

Here you see a family of fair fortune, living hospitably, beloved, revered, more looked up to by their neighbors than the wealthiest nobles —no family not proud to boast alliance with it. All at once, in the tranquil record of this happy race, appear that darling of the age, that hero of progress—a clever man of business. He be contented to live as his fathers! He be contented with such trifles as competence, respect, and love! Much too clever for that. The age is money-making—go with the age! He goes with the age. Born a gentleman only, he exalts himself into a trader. But at least he, it seems, if greedy, was not dishonest. He was born a gentleman, but his son was born a trader. The son is a still cleverer man of business; the son is consulted and trusted. Aha! He too goes with the age; to greed he links ambition. The trader's son wishes to return—what? to the rank of gentleman!—gentleman! nonsense! everybody is a gentleman nowadays—to the title of Lord. How ends it all! Could I sit but for twelve hours in the innermost heart of that Alfred Fletwode—could I see how, step by step from his childhood, the dishonest son was avariciously led on by the honest father to depart from the old *vestigia* of Fletwodes of Fletwode—scorning The Enough to covert The More—gaining The More to sigh 'it is not The Enough'—I think I might show that the age lives in a house of glass, and had better not for its own sake throw stones on the felon!"

"Ah, but, Mr. Chillingly, surely this is a very rare exception in the general——"

"Rare!" interrupted Kenelm, who was excited to a warmth of passion which would have startled his most intimate friend—if indeed an intimate friend had ever been vouchsafed to him —"rare! nay, how common—I don't say to the extent of forgery and fraud, but to the extent of degradation and ruin—is the greed of a Little More to those who have The Enough; is the discontent with competence, respect, and love, when catching sight of a money-bag! How many well-descended county families, cursed with an heir who is called a clever man of business, have vanished from the soil. A company starts—the clever man joins it—one bright day. Pouf! the old estates and the old name are powder. Ascend higher. Take nobles whose ancestral titles ought to be to English ears like the sound of clarions, awakening the most slothful to the scorn of money-bags and the passion for renown. Lo! in that mocking dance of death called the Progress of the Age, one who did not find Enough in a sovereign's revenue, and seeks The Little More as a gambler on the turf by the advice of blacklegs! Lo! another, with lands wider than his greatest ancestors ever possessed, must still go in for The Little More, adding acre to acre, heaping debt upon debt! Lo! a third, whose name, borne by his ancesters, was once the terror of England's foes—the landlord of a hotel! A fourth—but why go on through the list? Another and another still succeeds —each on the Road to Ruin, each in the Age of Progress. Ah, Miss Travers! in the old time it was through the Temple of Honor that one passed to the Temple of Fortune. In this wise age the process is reversed. But here comes your father."

"A thousand pardons!" said Leopold Travers. "That numskull Mondell kept me so long with his old-fashioned Tory doubts whether Liberal politics are favorable to agricultural prospects. But as he owes a round sum to a Whig lawyer I had to talk with his wife, a prudent woman; convinced her that his own agricultural prospects were safest on the Whig side of the question; and after kissing his baby and shaking his hand, booked his vote for George Belvoir—a plumper."

"I suppose," said Kenelm to himself, and with that candor which characterized him whenever he talked to himself, "that Travers has taken the right road to the Temple, not of Honor, but of honors, in every country, ancient or modern, which has adopted the system of popular suffrage."

CHAPTER XVII.

The next day Mrs. Campion and Cecilia were seated under the verandah. They were both ostensibly employed on two several pieces of embroidery, one intended for a screen, the other for a sofa-cushion. But the mind of neither was on her work.

Mrs. Campion.—"Has Mr. Chillingly said when he means to take leave?"

Cecilia.—"Not to me. How much my dear father enjoys his conversation!"

MRS. CAMPION.—"Cynicism and mockery were not so much the fashion among young men in your father's day as I suppose they are now, and therefore they seem new to Mr. Travers. To me they are not new, because I saw more of the old than the young when I lived in London, and cynicism and mockery are more natural to men who are leaving the world than to those who are entering it."

CECILIA.—"Dear Mrs. Campion, how bitter you are, and how unjust! You take much too literally the jesting way in which Mr. Chillingly expresses himself. There can be no cynicism in one who goes out of his way to make others happy."

MRS. CAMPION.—"You mean in the whim of making an ill-assorted marriage between a pretty village flirt and a sickly cripple, and settling a couple of peasants in a business for which they are wholly unfitted."

CECILIA.—"Jessie Wiles is not a flirt, and I am convinced that she will make Will Somers a very good wife, and that the shop will be a great success."

MRS. CAMPION.—"We shall see. Still, if Mr. Chillingly's talk belies his actions, he may be a good man, but he is a very affected one."

CECILIA—"Have I not heard you say that there are persons so natural that they seem affected to those who do not understand them?"

Mrs. Campion raised her eyes to Cecilia's face, dropped them again over her work, and said, in grave undertones—

"Take care, Cecilia."

"Take care of what?"

"My dearest child, forgive me; but I do not like the warmth with which you defend Mr. Chillingly."

"Would not my father defend him still more warmly if he had heard you?"

"Men judge of men in their relations to men. I am a woman, and judge of men in their relations to women. I should tremble for the happiness of any woman who joined her fate with that of Kenelm Chillingly."

"My dear friend, I do not understand you to-day."

"Nay; I did not mean to be so solemn, my love. After all, it is nothing to us whom Mr. Chillingly may or may not marry. He is but a passing visitor, and, once gone, the chances are that we may not see him again for years."

Thus speaking, Mrs. Campion again raised her eyes from her work, stealing a sidelong glance at Cecilia; and her mother-like heart sank within her, on noticing how suddenly pale the girl had become, and how her lips quivered. Mrs. Campion had enough knowledge of life to feel aware that she had committed a grievous blunder. In that earliest stage of virgin affection, when a girl is unconscious of more than a certain vague interest in one man which distinguishes him from others in her thoughts, —if she hears him unjustly disparaged, if some warning against him is implied, if the probability that he will never be more to her than a passing acquaintance is forcibly obtruded on her, —suddenly that vague interest, which might otherwise have faded away with many another girish fancy, becomes arrested, consolidated; the quick pang it occasions makes her involuntarily, and for the first time, question herself, and ask, "Do I love?" But when a girl of a nature so delicate as that of Cecilia Travers can ask herself the question, "Do I love?" her very modesty, her very shrinking from acknowledging that any power over her thoughts for weal or for woe can be acquired by a man, except through the sanction of that love which only becomes divine in her eyes when it is earnest and pure and self-devoted, makes her prematurely disposed to answer "yes." And when a girl of such a nature in her own heart answers "yes" to such a question, even if she deceive herself at the moment, she begins to cherish the deceit till the belief in her love becomes a reality. She has adopted a religion, false or true, and she would despise herself if she could be easily converted.

Mrs. Campion had so contrived that she had forced that question upon Cecilia, and she feared, by the girl's change of countenance, that the girl's heart had answered "yes."

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHILE the conversation just narrated took place, Kenelm had walked forth to pay a visit to Will Somers. All obstacles to Will's marriage were now cleared away; the transfer of lease for the shop had been signed, and the banns were to be published for the first time on the following Sunday. We need not say that Will was very happy. Kenelm then paid

a visit to Mrs. Bowles, with whom he stayed an hour. On re-entering the Park, he saw Travers, walking slowly, with downcast eyes, and his hands clasped behind him (his habit when in thought). He did not observe Kenelm's approach till within a few feet of him, and he then greeted his guest in listless accents, unlike his usual cheerful tones.

"I have been visiting the man you have made so happy," said Kenelm.

"Who can that be?"

"Will Somers. Do you make so many people happy that your reminiscence of them is lost in their number?"

Travers smiled faintly, and shook his head.

Kenelm went on. "I have also seen Mrs. Bowles, and you will be pleased to hear that Tom is satisfied with his change of abode; there is no chance of his returning to Graveleigh; and Mrs. Bowles took very kindly to my suggestion that the little property you wish for should be sold to you, and in that case, she would remove to Luscombe to be near her son."

"I thank you much for your thought of me," said Travers, "and the affair shall be seen to at once, though the purchase is no longer important to me. I ought to have told you three days ago, but it slipped my memory, that a neighboring squire, a young fellow just come into his property, has offered to exchange a capital farm, much nearer to my residence, for the lands I hold in Graveleigh, including Saunderson's farm and the cottages: they are quite at the outskirts of my estate, but run into his, and the exchange will be advantageous to both. Still I am glad that the neighborhood should be thoroughly rid of a brute like Tom Bowles."

"You would not call him brute if you knew him; but I am sorry to hear that Will Somers will be under another landlord."

"It does not matter, since his tenure is secured for fourteen years."

"What sort of a man is the new landlord?"

"I don't know much of him. He was in the army till his father died, and has only just made his appearance in the county. He has, however, already earned the character of being too fond of the other sex, and it is well that pretty Jessie is to be safely married."

Travers then relapsed into a moody silence from which Kenelm found it difficult to rouse him. At length the latter said, kindly—

"My dear Mr. Travers, do not think I take a liberty if I venture to guess that something has happened this morning which troubles or vexes you. When that is the case, it is often a relief to say what it is, even to a confidant so unable to advise or to comfort as myself."

"You are a good fellow, Chillingly, and I know not, at least in these parts, a man to whom I would unburthen myself more freely. I am put out, I confess; disappointed unreasonably, in a cherished wish, and," he added, with a slight laugh, "it always annoys me when I don't have my own way."

"So it does me."

"Don't you think that George Belvoir is a very fine young man?"

"Certainly."

"*I* call him handsome; he is steadier, too, than most men of his age, and of his command of money; and yet he does not want spirit nor knowledge of life. To every advantage of rank and fortune he adds the industry and the ambition which attain distinction in public life."

"Quite true. Is he going to withdraw from the election after all?"

"Good heavens, no!"

"Then how does he not let you have your own way?"

"It is not he," said Travers, peevishly; "it is Cecilia. Don't you understand that George is precisely the husband I would choose for her; and this morning came a very well written manly letter from him, asking my permission to pay his addresses to her."

"But that is your own way so far."

"Yes, and here comes the balk. Of course I had to refer it to Cecilia, and she positively declines, and has no reasons to give; does not deny that George is good-looking and sensible, that he is a man of whose preference any girl might be proud; but she chooses to say she cannot love him, and when I ask why she cannot love him, has no other answer than that 'she cannot say.' It is too provoking."

"It is provoking," answered Kenelm; "but then Love is the most dunder-headed of all the passions; it never will listen to reason. The very rudiments of logic are unknown to it. 'Love has no wherefore,' says one of those Latin poets who wrote love-verses called elegies—a name which we moderns appropriate to funeral dirges. For my own part, I can't understand how any one can be expected vol-

untarily to make up his mind to go out of his mind. And if Miss Travers cannot go out of her mind because George Belvoir does, you could not argue her into doing so if you talked till doomsday."

Travers smiled in spite of himself, but he answered gravely,—"Certainly, I would not wish Cissy to marry any man she disliked, but she does not dislike George—no girl could; and where that is the case, a girl so sensible, so affectionate, so well brought up, is sure to love, after marriage, a thoroughly kind and estimable man, especially when she has no previous attachment—which, of course, Cissy never had. In fact, though I do not wish to force my daughter's will, I am not yet disposed to give up my own. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly!"

"I am the more inclined to a marriage so desirable in every way, because when Cissy comes out in London—which she has not yet done—she is sure to collect around her face and her presumptive inheritance all the handsome fortune-hunters and titled *vauriens;* and if in love there is no wherefore, how can I be sure that she may not fall in love with a scamp?"

"I think you may be sure of that," said Kenelm. "Miss Travers has too much mind."

"Yes, at present; but did you not say that in love people go out of their mind?"

"True! I forgot that."

"I am not then disposed to dismiss poor George's offer with a decided negative, and yet it would be unfair to mislead him by encouragement. In fact, I'll be hanged if I know how to reply."

"You think Miss Travers does not dislike George Belvoir, and if she saw more of him may like him better, and it would be good for her as well as for him not to put an end to that chance?"

"Exactly so."

"Why not then write: 'My dear George,—You have my best wishes, but my daughter does not seem disposed to marry at present. Let me consider your letter not written, and continue on the same terms as we were before.' Perhaps, as George knows Virgil, you might find your own school-boy recollections of that poet useful here, and add, '*Varium et mutabile semper femina;*' hackneyed, but true."

"My dear Chillingly, your suggestion is capital. How the deuce at your age have you contrived to know the world so well?"

Kenelm answered in the pathetic tones so natural to his voice, "By being only a looker-on;—alas!"

Leopold Travers felt much relieved after he had written his reply to George. He had not been quite so ingenuous in his revelation to Chillingly as he may have seemed. Conscious, like all proud and fond fathers, of his daughter's attractions, he was not without some apprehension that Kenelm himself might entertain an ambition at variance with that of George Belvoir: if so, he deemed it well to put an end to such ambition while yet in time—partly because his interest was already pledged to George; partly because, in rank and fortune, George was the better match; partly because George was of the same political party as himself—while Sir Peter, and probably Sir Peter's heir, espoused the opposite side; and partly also because, with all his personal liking to Kenelm, Leopold Travers, as a very sensible, practical man of the world, was not sure that a baronet's heir who tramped the country on foot in the dress of a petty farmer, and indulged pugilistic propensities in martial encounters with stalwart farriers, was likely to make a safe husband and a comfortable son-in-law. Kenelm's words, and still more his manner, convinced Travers that any apprehensions of rivalry that he had previously conceived, were utterly groundless.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE same evening, after dinner (during that lovely summer month they dined at Neesdale Park at an unfashionably early hour), Kenelm, in company with Travers and Cecilia, ascended a gentle eminence at the back of the gardens, on which there were some picturesque ivy-grown ruins of an ancient priory, and commanding the best view of a glorious sunset and a subject landscape of vale and wood, rivulet and distant hills.

"Is the delight in scenery," said Kenelm, "really an acquired gift, as some philosophers tell us? is it true that young children and rude savages do not feel it—that the eye must be educated to comprehend its charm, and that

the eye can be only educated through the mind?"

"I should think your philosophers are right," said Travers. "When I was a schoolboy, I thought no scenery was like the flat of a cricket ground; when I hunted at Melton, I thought that unpicturesque country more beautiful than Devonshire. It is only of late years that I feel a sensible pleasure in scenery for its own sake, apart from associations of custom or the uses to which we apply them."

"And what say you, Miss Travers?"

"I scarcely know what to say," answered Cecilia, musingly. "I can remember no time in my childhood when I did not feel delight in that which seemed to me beautiful in scenery, but I suspect that I very vaguely distinguished one kind of beauty from another. A common field with daisies and buttercups was beautiful to me then, and I doubt if I saw anything more beautiful in extensive landscapes."

"True," said Kenelm: "it is not in early childhood that we carry the sight into distance: as is the mind so is the eye; in early childhood the mind revels in the present, and the eye rejoices most in the things nearest to it. I don't think in childhood that we

"'Watched with wistful eyes the setting sun.'"

"Ah! what a world of thought in that word '*wistful*'!" murmured Cecilia, as her gaze riveted itself on the western heavens, towards which Kenelm had pointed as he spoke, where the enlarging orb rested half its disc on the rim of the horzion.

She had seated herself on a fragment of the ruin, backed by the hollows of a broken arch. The last rays of the sun lingered on her young face, and then lost themselves in the gloom of the arch behind. There was a silence for some minutes, during which the sun had sunk. Rosy clouds in thin flakes still floated, momently waning; and the eve-star stole forth steadfast, bright, and lonely—nay, lonely not now;—that sentinel has aroused a host.

Said a voice, "No sign of rain yet, Squire. What will become of the turnips?"

"Real life again! Who can escape it?" muttered Kenelm, as his eyes rested on the burly figure of the Squire's bailiff.

"Ha! North," said Travers, "what brings you here? No bad news, I hope."

"Indeed, yes, Squire. The Durham bull—"

"The Durham bull! What of him? You frighten me."

"Taken bad. Colic."

"Excuse me, Chillingly," cried Travers; "I must be off. A most valuable animal, and no one I can trust to doctor him but myself."

"That's true enough," said the bailiff, admiringly. "There's not a veterinary in the county like the Squire."

Travers was already gone, and the panting bailiff had hard work to catch him up.

Kenelm seated himself beside Cecilia on the ruined fragment.

"How I envy your father!" said he.

"Why just at this moment? Because he knows how to doctor the bull?" said Cecilia, with a sweet low laugh.

"Well, that is something to envy. It is a pleasure to relieve from pain any of God's creatures—even a Durham bull."

"Indeed, yes. I am justly rebuked."

"On the contrary, you are to be justly praised. Your question suggested to me an amiable sentiment in place of the selfish one which was uppermost in my thoughts. I envied your father because he creates for himself so many objects of interest; because while he can appreciate the mere sensuous enjoyment of a landscape and a sunset, he can find mental excitement in turnip crops and bulls. Happy, Miss Travers, is the Practical Man."

"When my dear father was as young as you, Mr. Chillingly, I am sure that he had no more interest in turnips and bulls than you have. I do not doubt that some day you will be as practical as he is in that respect."

"Do you think so—sincerely?"

Cecilia made no answer.

Kenelm repeated the question.

"Sincerely, then, I do not know whether you will take interest in precisely the same things that interest my father; but there are other things than turnips and cattle which belong to what you call 'practical life,' and in these you will take interest, as you took it in the fortunes of Will Somers and Jessie Wiles."

"That was no practical interest. I got nothing by it. But even if that interest were practical—I mean productive, as cattle and turnip crops are—a succession of Somerses and Wileses is not to be hoped for. History never repeats itself."

"May I answer you, though very humbly?"

"Miss Travers, the wisest man that ever existed never was wise enough to know woman; but I think most men ordinarily wise will agree in this, that woman is by no means a humble creature, and that when she says she 'answers very humbly,' she does not mean what she says. Permit me to entreat you to answer very loftily."

Cecilia laughed and blushed. The laugh was musical; the blush was—what? Let any man, seated beside a girl like Cecelia at starry twilight, find the right epithet for that blush. I pass it by epithetless. But she answered, firmly though sweetly—

"Are there not things very practical, and affecting the happiness not of one or two individuals, but of innumerable thousands, in which a man like Mr. Chillingly cannot fail to feel interest, long before he is my father's age?"

"Forgive me; you do not answer—you question. I imitate you, and ask what are those things as applicable to a man like Mr. Chillingly?"

Cecilia gathered herself up, as with the desire to express a great deal in short substance, and then said—

"In the expression of thought, literature; in the conduct of action, politics."

Kenelm Chillingly stared, dumfounded. I suppose the greatest enthusiast for Woman's Rights could not assert more reverentially than he did the cleverness of women; but among the things which the cleverness of women did not achieve, he had always placed "laconics." "No woman," he was wont to say, "ever invented an axiom or a proverb."

"Miss Travers," he said at last, "before we proceed farther, vouchsafe to tell me if that very terse reply of yours is spontaneous and original; or whether you have not borrowed it from some book which I have not chanced to read?"

Cecilia pondered honestly, and then said, "I don't think it is from any book; but I owe so many of my thoughts to Mrs. Campion, and she lived so much among clever men, that——"

"I see it all, and accept your definition, no matter whence it came. You think I might become an author or a politician. Did you ever read an essay by a living author called 'Motive Power?'"

"No."

"That essay is designed to intimate that without motive power a man, whatever his talents or his culture, does nothing practical. The mainsprings of motive power are Want and Ambition. They are absent from my mechanism. By the accident of birth I do not require bread and cheese; by the accident of temperament and of philosophical culture I care nothing about praise or blame. But without want of bread and cheese, and with a most stolid indifference to praise and blame, do you honestly think that a man will do anything practical in literature or politics? Ask Mrs. Campion."

"I will not ask her. Is the sense of duty nothing?"

"Alas! we interpret duty so variously. Of mere duty, as we commonly understand the word, I do not think I shall fail more than other men. But for the fair development of all the good that is in us, do you believe that we should adopt some line of conduct against which our whole heart rebels? Can you say to the clerk, 'Be a poet?' Can you say to the poet, 'Be a clerk?' It is no more to the happiness of a man's being to order him to take to one career when his whole heart is set on another, than it is to order him to marry one woman when it is to another woman that his heart will turn."

Cecilia here winced and looked away. Kenelm had more tact than most men of his age—that is, a keener perception of subjects to avoid; but then Kenelm had a wretched habit of forgetting the person he talked to and talking to himself. Utterly oblivious of George Belvoir, he was talking to himself now. Not then observing the effect his *mal-à-propos* dogma had produced on his listener, he went on—"Happiness is a word very lightly used. It may mean little—it may mean much. By the word happiness I would signify, not the momentary joy of a child who gets a plaything, but the lasting harmony between our inclinations and our objects; and without that harmony we are a discord to ourselves, we are incompletions, we are failures. Yet there are plenty of advisers who say to us, 'It is a duty to be a discord.' I deny it."

Here Cecilia rose and said in a low voice, "It is getting late. We must go homeward."

They descended the green eminence slowly, and at first in silence. The bats, emerging

from the ivied ruins they left behind, flitted and skimmed before them, chasing the insects of the night. A moth, escaping from its pursuer, alighted on Cecilia's breast, as if for refuge.

"The bats are practical," said Kenelm: "they are hungry, and their motive power to-night is strong. Their interest is in the insects they chase. They have no interest in the stars; but the stars lure the moth."

Cecilia drew her slight scarf over the moth, so that it might not fly off and become a prey to the bats. "Yet," said she, "the moth is practical too."

"Ay, just now, since it has found an asylum from the danger that threatened it in its course towards the stars."

Cecilia felt the beating of her heart, upon which lay the moth concealed. Did she think that a deeper and more tender meaning than they outwardly expressed was couched in these words? If so, she erred. They now neared the garden gate, and Kenelm paused as he opened it. "See," he said, "the moon has just risen over those dark firs, making the still night stiller. Is it not strange that we mortals, placed amid perpetual agitation and turmoil and strife, as if our natural element, conceive a sense of holiness in the images antagonistic to our real life—I mean in images of repose? I feel at the moment as if I suddenly were made better, now that heaven and earth have suddenly become yet more tranquil. I am now conscious of a purer and sweeter moral than either I or you drew from the insect you have sheltered. I must come to the poets to express it—

> 'The desire of the moth for the star,
> Of the night for the morrow;
> *The devotion to something afar*
> *From the sphere of our sorrow.*'

Oh, that something afar! that something afar! never to be reached on this earth—never, never!"

There was such a wail in that cry from the man's heart that Cecilia could not resist the inpulse of a divine compassion. She laid her hand on his, and looked on the dark mildness of his upturned face with eyes that Heaven meant to be wells of comfort to grieving man. At the light touch of that hand Kenelm started, looked down, and met those soothing eyes.

"I am happy to tell you that I have saved my Durham," cried out Mr. Travers from the other side of the gate.

CHAPTER XX.

As Kenelm that night retired to his own room, he paused on the landing-place opposite to the portrait which Mr. Travers had consigned to that desolate exile. This daughter of a race dishonored in its extinction might well have been the glory of the house she had entered as a bride. The countenance was singularly beautiful, and a character of beauty eminently patrician; there was in its expression a gentleness and modesty not often found in the female portraits of Sir Peter Lely; and in the eyes and in the smile a wonderful aspect of innocent happiness.

"What a speaking homily," soliloquized Kenelm, addressing the picture, "against the ambition thy fair descendant would awake in me, art thou, O lovely image! For generations thy beauty lived in this canvas, a thing of joy, the pride of the race it adorned. Owner after owner said to admiring guests, 'Yes, a fine portrait, by Lely; she was my ancestress—a Fletwode of Fletwode.' Now, lest guests should remember that a Fletwode married a Travers, thou art thrust out of sight; not even Lely's art can make thee of value, can redeem thine innocent self from disgrace. And the last of the Fletwode's, doubtless the most ambitious of all—the most bent on restoring and regilding the old lordly name—dies a felon; the infamy of one living man so large that it can blot out the honor of the dead." He turned his eyes from the smile of the portrait, entered his own room, and, seating himself by the writing-table, drew blotting-book and note-paper towards him, took up the pen, and instead of writing fell into deep reverie. There was a slight frown on his brow, on which frowns were rare. He was very angry with himself.

"Kenelm," he said, entering into his customary dialogue with that self, "it becomes you, forsooth, to moralize about the honor of races which have no affinity with you. Son of Sir Peter Chillingly, look at home. Are you quite sure that you have not said or done or looked a something that may bring trouble to

the hearth on which you are received as guest? What right had you to be moaning forth your egotisms, not remembering that your words fell on compassionate ears, and that such words, heard at moonlight by a girl whose heart they move to pity, may have dangers for her peace. Shame on you, Kenelm! shame! knowing too what her father's wish is; and knowing too that you have not the excuse of desiring to win that fair creature for yourself. What do you mean, Kenelm? I don't hear you; speak out. Oh, 'that I am a vain coxcomb to fancy that she could take a fancy to me'—well, perhaps I am; I hope so earnestly; and, at all events, there has been and shall be no time for much mischief. We are off to-morrow, Kenelm; bestir yourself and pack up, write your letters, and then 'put out the light—put out *the* light!'"

But this converser with himself did not immediately set to work, as agreed upon by that twofold one. He rose and walked restlessly to and fro the floor, stopping ever and anon to look at the pictures on the walls.

Several of the worst painted of the family portraits had been consigned to the room tenanted by Kenelm, which, though both the oldest and largest bed-chamber in the house, was always appropriated to a bachelor male guest, partly because it was without dressing-room, remote, and only approached by the small back staircase, to the landing place of which Arabella had been banished in disgrace; and partly because it had the reputation of being haunted, and ladies are more alarmed by that superstition than men are supposed to be. The portraits on which Kenelm now paused to gaze were of various dates, from the reign of Elizabeth to that of George III., none of them by eminent artists, and none of them the effigies of ancestors who had left names in history—in short, such portraits as are often seen in the country houses of well-born squires. One family type of feature or expression pervaded most of these portraits—features clear-cut and hardy, expression open and honest. And though not one of those dead men had been famous, each of them had contributed his unostentatious share, in his own simple way, to the movements of his time. That worthy in ruff and corselet had manned his own ship at his own cost against the Armada; never had been repaid by the thrifty Burleigh the expenses which had harassed him and diminished his patrimony; never had been even knighted. That gentleman with short straight hair, which overhung his forehead, leaning on his sword with one hand, and a book open in the other hand, had served as representative of his county town in the Long Parliament, fought under Cromwell at Marston Moor, and resisting the Protector when he removed the 'bauble,' was one of the patriots incarcerated in "Hell hole." He, too, had diminished his patrimony, maintaining two troopers and two horses at his own charge, and "Hell hole" was all he got in return. A third, with a sleeker expression of countenance, and a large wig, flourishing in the quiet times of Charles II., had only been a justice of the peace, but his alert look showed that he had been a very active one. He had neither increased nor diminished his ancestral fortune. A fourth, in the costume of William III.'s reign, had somewhat added to the patrimony by becoming a lawyer. He must have been a successful one. He is inscribed "Serjeant at law." A fifth, a lieutenant in the army, was killed at Blenheim; his portrait was that of a very young and handsome man, taken the year before his death. His wife's portrait is placed in the drawing-room because it was painted by Kneller. She was handsome too, and married again a nobleman, whose portrait, of course, was not in the family collection. Here there was a gap in chronological arrangement, the lieutenant's heir being an infant; but in the time of George II. another Travers appeared as the governor of a West India colony. His son took part in a very different movement of the age. He is represented old, venerable, with white hair, and underneath his effigy is inscribed, "Follower of Wesley." His successor completes the collection. He is in naval uniform; he is in full length, and one of his legs is a wooden one. He is Captain, R.N., and inscribed, "Fought under Nelson at Trafalgar." That portrait would have found more dignified place in the reception-rooms if the face had not been forbiddingly ugly, and the picture itself a villainous daub.

"I see," said Kenelm, stopping short, "why Cecilia Travers has been reared to talk of duty as a practical interest in life. These men of a former time seem to have lived to discharge a duty, and not to follow the progress of the

age in the chase of a money-bag—except perhaps one, but then to be sure he was a lawyer. Kenelm, rouse up and listen to me; whatever we are, whether active or indolent, is not my favorite maxim a just and a true one—viz., 'A good man does good by living'? But, for that, he must be a harmony and not a discord. Kenelm, you lazy dog, we must pack up."

Kenelm then refilled his portmanteau, and labelled and directed it to Exmundham, after which he wrote these three notes:—

Note 1.

TO THE MARCHIONESS OF GLENALVON.

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND MONITRESS,—I have left your last letter a month unanswered. I could not reply to your congratulations on the event of my attaining the age of twenty-one. That event is a conventional sham, and you know how I abhor shams and conventions. The truth is, that I am either much younger than twenty-one or much older. As to all designs on my peace in standing for our county at the next election, I wished to defeat them, and I have done so; and now I have commenced a course of travel. I had intended on starting to confine it to my native country. Intentions are mutable. I am going abroad. You shall hear of my whereabout. I write this from the house of Leopold Travers, who, I understand from his fair daughter, is a connection of yours;—a man to be highly esteemed and cordially liked.

"No, in spite of all your flattering predictions, I shall never be anything in this life more distinguished than what I am now. Lady Glenalvon allows me to sign myself her grateful friend,

"K. C."

Note 2.

"DEAR COUSIN MIVERS.—I am going abroad. I may want money; for, in order to rouse motive power within me, I mean to want money if I can. When I was a boy of sixteen you offered me money to write attacks upon veteran authors for 'The Londoner.' Will you give me money now for a similar display of that grand New Idea of our generation—viz., that the less a man knows of a subject the better he understands it? I am about to travel into countries which I have never seen, and among races I have never known. My arbitrary judgments on both will be invaluable to 'The Londoner' from a Special Correspondent who shares your respect for the anonymous, and whose name is never to be divulged. Direct your answer by return to me, *poste restante*, Calais.—Yours truly,

"K. C."

Note 3.

"MY DEAR FATHER,—I found your letter here, whence I depart to-morrow. Excuse haste. I go abroad, and shall write to you from Calais.

"I admire Leopold Travers very much. After all, how much of self-balance there is in a true English gentleman! Toss him up and down where you will, and he always alights on his feet—a gentleman. He has one child, a daughter named Cecilia—handsome enough to allure into wedlock any mortal whom Decimus Roach had not convinced that in celibacy lay the right 'Approach to the Angels.' Moreover, she is a girl whom one can talk with. Even you could talk with her. Travers wishes her to marry a very respectable, good-looking, promising gentleman, in every way 'suitable,' as they say. And if she does, she will rival that pink and perfection of polished womanhood, Lady Glenalvon. I send you back my portmanteau. I have pretty well exhausted my experience-money, but have not yet encroached on my monthly allowance. I mean still to live upon that, eking it out, if necessary, by the sweat of my brow—or brains. But if any case requiring extra funds should occur—a case in which that extra would do such real good to another that I feel *you* would do it—why, I must draw a check on your bankers. But understand that is your expense, not mine, and it is *you* who are to be repaid in heaven. Dear father, how I do love and honor you every day more and more! Promise you not to propose to any young lady till I come first to you for consent!—oh, my dear father, how could you doubt it? how doubt that I could not be happy with any wife whom you could not love as a daughter? Accept that promise as sacred. But I wish you had asked me something in which obedience was not much too facile to be a test of duty. I could not have obeyed you more cheerfully if you had asked me to promise never to propose to any young lady at all. Had you asked me to promise that I would renounce the dignity of reason for the frenzy of love, or the freedom of man for the servitude of husband, then I might have sought to achieve the impossible; but I should have died in the effort!—and thou wouldst have known that remorse which haunts the bed of the tyrant.—Your affectionate son, "K. C."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE next morning Kenelm surprised the party at breakfast by appearing in the coarse habiliments in which he had first made his host's acquaintance. He did not glance towards Cecilia when he announced his departure; but, his eye resting on Mrs. Campion, he smiled, perhaps a little sadly, at seeing her countenance brighten up and hearing her give a short sigh of relief. Travers tried hard to induce him to stay a few days longer, but Kenelm was firm. "The summer is wearing away," said he, "and I have far to go before the flowers fade and the snows fall. On the third night from this I shall sleep on foreign soil."

"You are going abroad, then?" asked Mrs. Campion.

"Yes."

"A sudden resolution, Mr. Chillingly. The other day you talked of visiting the Scotch lakes."

"True; but on reflection, they will be crowded with holiday tourists, many of whom I shall probably know. Abroad I shall be free, for I shall be unknown."

"I suppose you will be back for the hunting season," said Travers.

"I think not. I do not hunt foxes."

"Probably we shall at all events meet in London," said Travers. "I think, after long rustication, that a season or two in the bustling capital may be a salutary change for mind as well as for body! and it is time that Cecilia were presented and her court-dress specially commemorated in the columns of the 'Morning Post.'"

Cecilia was seemingly too busied behind the tea-urn to heed this reference to her *debut.*

"I shall miss you terribly," cried Travers, a few moments afterwards, and with a hearty emphasis. "I declare that you have quite unsettled me. Your quaint sayings will be ringing in my ears long after you are gone."

There was a rustle as of a woman's dress in sudden change of movement behind the tea-urn.

"Cissy," said Mrs. Campion, "are we ever to have our tea?"

"I beg pardon," answered a voice behind the urn. "I hear Pompey" (the Skye terrier) "whining on the lawn. They have shut him out. I will be back presently."

Cecilia rose and was gone. Mrs. Campion took her place at the tea-urn.

"It is quite absurd of Cissy to be so fond of that hideous dog," said Travers, petulantly.

"Its hideousness is its beauty," returned Mrs. Campion, laughing. "Mr. Belvoir selected it for her as having the longest back and the shortest legs of any dog he could find in Scotland."

"Ah, George gave it to her; I forgot that," said Travers, laughing pleasantly.

It was some minutes before Miss Travers returned with the Skye terrier, and she seemed to have recovered her spirits in regaining that ornamental accession to the party—talking very quickly and gaily, and with flushed cheeks, like a young person excited by her own overflow of mirth.

But when, half an hour afterwards, Kenelm took leave of her and Mrs. Campion at the hall-door, the flush was gone, her lips were tightly compressed, and her parting words were not audible. Then, as his figure (side by side with her father, who accompanied his guest to the lodge) swiftly passed across the lawn and vanished amid the trees beyond, Mrs. Campion wound a mother-like arm around her waist and kissed her. Cecilia shivered and turned her face to her friend smiling; but such a smile,—one of those smiles that seem brimful of tears.

"Thank you, dear," she said, meekly; and gliding away towards the flower-garden, lingered a while by the gate which Kenelm had opened the night before. Then she went with languid steps up the green slopes towards the ruined priory.

BOOK FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

It is somewhat more than a year and a half since Kenelm Chillingly left England, and the scene now is in London, during that earlier and more sociable season which precedes the Easter holidays—season in which the charm of intellectual companionship is not yet withered away in the heated atmosphere of crowded rooms—season in which parties are small, and conversation extends beyond the interchange of commonplace with one's next neighbor at a dinner-table—season in which you have a fair chance of finding your warmest friends not absorbed by the superior claims of their chilliest acquaintances.

There was what is called a conversazione at the house of one of those Whig noblemen who yet retain the graceful art of bringing agreeable people together, and collecting round them the true aristocracy, which combines letters and art and science with hereditary rank and political distinction—that art which was the happy secret of the Lansdownes and Hollands of the last generation. Lord Beaumanoir was himself a genial, well-read man, a good judge of art, and a pleasant talker. He had a charming wife, devoted to him and to her children, but with enough love of general approbation to make herself as popular in the fashionable world as if she sought in its gaieties a refuge from the dulness of domestic life.

Amongst the guests at the Beaumanoirs this evening were two men, seated apart in a small room, and conversing familiarly. The one might be about fifty-four; he was tall, strongly built, but not corpulent, somewhat bald, with black eyebrows, dark eyes, bright and keen, mobile lips, round which there played a shrewd and sometimes sarcastic smile.

This gentleman, the Right Hon. Gerard Danvers, was a very influential member of Parliament. He had, when young for English public life, attained to high office; but—partly from a great distaste to the drugdery of administration; partly from a pride of temperament, which unfitted him for the subordination that a Cabinet owes to its chief; partly, also, from a not uncommon kind of epicurean philosophy, at once joyous and cynical, which sought the pleasures of life and held very cheap its honors—he had obstinately declined to re-enter office, and only spoke on rare occasions. On such occasions he carried great weight, and by the brief expression of his opinions, commanded more votes than many an orator infinitely more eloquent. Despite his want of ambition, he was fond of power in his own way—power over the people who *had* power; and, in the love of political intrigue, he found an amusement for an intellect very subtle and very active. At this moment he was bent on a new combination among the leaders of different sections in the same party by which certain veterans were to retire, and certain younger men to be admitted into the Administration. It was an amiable feature in his character that he had a sympathy with the young, and had helped to bring into Parliament, as well as into office, some of the ablest of a generation later than his own. He gave them sensible counsel, was pleased when they succeeded, and encouraged them when they failed—always provided that they had stuff enough in them to redeem the failure; if not, he gently dropped them from his intimacy, but maintained sufficiently familiar terms with them to be pretty sure that he could influence their votes whenever he so desired.

The gentleman with whom he was now conversing was young, about five-and-twenty—not

yet in Parliament, but with an intense desire to obtain a seat in it, and with one of those reputations which a youth carries away from school and college, justified, not by honors purely academical, but by an impression of ability and power created on the minds of his contemporaries, and endorsed by his elders. He had done little at the university beyond taking a fair degree—except acquiring at the Debating Society the fame of an exceedingly ready and adroit speaker. On quitting college he had written one or two political articles in a quarterly review which created a sensation; and though belonging to no profession, and having but a small yet independent income, society was very civil to him, as to a man who would some day or other attain a position in which he could damage his enemies and serve his friends. Something in this young man's countenance and bearing tended to favor the credit given to his ability and his promise. In his countenance there was no beauty; in his bearing no elegance. But in that countenance there was vigor—there was energy—there was audacity. A forehead wide but low, protuberant in those organs over the brow which indicate the qualities fitted for perception and judgment—qualities for everyday life; eyes of the clear English blue, small, somewhat sunken, vigilant, sagacious, penetrating; a long straight upper lip, significant of resolute purpose; a mouth in which a student of physiognomy would have detected a dangerous charm. The smile was captivating, but it was artificial, surrounded by dimples, and displaying teeth white, small, strong, but divided from each other. The expression of that smile would have been frank and candid to all who failed to notice that it was not in harmony with the brooding forehead and the steely eye —that it seemed to stand distinct from the rest of the face, like a feature that had learned its part. There was that physical power in the back of the head which belongs to men who make their way in life—combative and destructive. All gladiators have it; so have great debaters and great reformers—that is, reformers who can destroy, but not necessarily reconstruct. So, too, in the bearing of the man there was a hardy self-confidence, much too simple and unaffected for his worst enemy to call it self-conceit. It was the bearing of one who knew how to maintain personal dignity without seeming to care about it. Never servile to the great, never arrogant to the little; so little over-refined that it was never vulgar,—a popular bearing.

The room in which these gentlemen were seated was separated from the general suite of apartments by a lobby off the landing-place, and served for Lady Beaumanoir's boudoir. Very pretty it was, but simply furnished, with chintz draperies. The walls were adorned with drawings in water-colors, and precious specimens of china on fanciful Parian brackets. At one corner, by a window that looked southward and opened on a spacious balcony, glazed in and filled with flowers, stood one of those high trellised screens, first invented, I believe, in Vienna, and along which ivy is so trained as to form an arbor.

The recess thus constructed, and which was completely out of sight from the rest of the room, was the hostess's favorite writing nook. The two men I have described were seated near the screen, and had certainly no suspicion that any one could be behind it.

"Yes," said Mr. Danvers, from an ottoman niched in another recess of the room, "I think there will be an opening at Saxboro' soon; Milroy wants a colonial Government; and if we can reconstruct the Cabinet as I propose, he would get one, Saxboro' would thus be vacant. But, my dear fellow, Saxboro' is a place to be wooed through love, and only won through money. It demands liberalism from a candidate—two kinds of liberalism seldom united; the liberalism in opinion which is natural enough to a very poor man, and the liberalism in expenditure which is scarcely to be obtained except from a very rich one. You may compute the cost of Saxboro' at £3,000 to get in, and about £2,000 more to defend your seat against a petition—the defeated candidate nearly always petitions. £5,000 is a large sum; and the worst of it is, that the extreme opinions to which the member for Saxboro' must pledge himself are a drawback to an official career. Violent politicians are not the best raw material out of which to manufacture fortunate placemen."

"The opinions do not so much matter; the expense does. I cannot afford £5,000, or even £3,000."

"Would not Sir Peter assist? He has, you say, only one son; and if anything happen to that son, you are the next heir."

"My father quarrelled with Sir Peter, and harassed him by an imprudent and ungracious litigation. I scarcely think I could apply to him for money to obtain a seat in Parliament upon the democratic side of the question; for though I know little of his politics, I take it for granted that a country gentleman of old family and £10,000 a-year cannot well be a democrat."

"Then I presume you would not be a democrat if, by the death of your cousin, you became heir to the Chillinglys."

"I am not sure what I might be in that case. There are times when a democrat of ancient lineage and good estates could take a very high place amongst the aristocracy."

"Humph! my dear Gordon, *vous irez loin.*"

"I hope to do so. Measuring myself against the men of my own day, I do not see many who should outstrip me."

"What sort of a fellow is your cousin Kenelm? I met him once or twice when he was very young, and reading with Welby in London. People then said that he was very clever; he struck me as very odd."

"I never saw him; but from all I hear, whether he be clever or whether he be odd, he is not likely to do anything in life—a dreamer."

"Writes poetry perhaps?"

"Capable of it, I daresay."

Just then some other guests came into the room, amongst them a lady of an appearance at once singularly distinguished and singularly prepossessing, rather above the common height, and with a certain indescribable nobility of air and presence. Lady Glenalvon was one of the queens of the London world, and no queen of that world was ever less worldly or more queenlike. Side by side with the lady was Mr. Chillingly Mivers. Gordon and Mivers interchanged friendly nods, and the former sauntered away and was soon lost amid a crowd of other young men, with whom, as he could converse well and lightly on things which interested them, he was rather a favorite, though he was not an intimate associate. Mr. Danvers retired into a corner of the adjoining lobby, where he favored the French ambassador with his views on the state of Europe and the reconstruction of Cabinets in general.

"But," said Lady Glenalvon to Chillingly Mivers, "are you quite sure that my old young friend Kenelm is here? Since you told me so, I have looked everywhere for him in vain. I should so much like to see him again."

"I certainly caught a glimpse of him half an hour ago; but before I could escape from a geologist, who was boring me about the Silurian system, Kenelm had vanished."

"Perhaps it was his ghost!"

"Well, we certainly live in the most credulous and superstitious age upon record; and so many people tell me that they converse with the dead under the table, that it seems impertinent in me to say that I don't believe in ghosts."

"Tell me some of those incomprehensible stories about table-rapping," said Lady Glenalvon. "There is a charming snug recess here behind the screen."

Scarcely had she entered the recess than she drew back with a start and an exclamation of amaze. Seated at the table within the recess, his chin resting on his hand, and his face cast down in abstracted reverie, was a young man. So still was his attitude, so calmly mournful the expression of his face, so estranged did he seem from all the motley but brilliant assemblage which circled around the solitude he had made for himself, that he might well have been deemed one of those visitants from another world whose secrets the intruder had wished to learn. Of that intruder's presence he was evidently unconscious. Recovering her surprise, she stole up to him, placed her hand on his shoulder, and uttered his name in a low gentle voice. At that sound Kenelm Chillingly looked up.

"Do you not remember me?" asked Lady Glenalvon. Before he could answer, Mivers, who had followed the Marchioness into the recess, interposed.

"My dear Kenelm, how are you? When did you come to London? Why have you not called on me; and what on earth are you hiding yourself for?"

Kenelm had now recovered the self-possession which he rarely lost long in the presence of others. He returned cordially his kinsman's greeting, and kissed with his wonted chivalrous grace the fair hand which the lady withdrew from his shoulder and extended to his pressure. "Remember you!" he said to Lady Glenalvon, with the kindliest expression of his soft dark eyes; "I am not so far advanced towards the noon of life as to forget the sunshine that

brightened its morning. My dear Mivers, your questions are easily answered. I arrived in England two weeks ago, stayed at Exmundham till this morning, to-day dined with Lord Thetford, whose acquaintance I made abroad, and was persuaded by him to come here and be introduced to his father and mother, the Beaumanoirs. After I had undergone that ceremony, the sight of so many strange faces frightened me into shyness. Entering this room at a moment when it was quite deserted, I resolved to turn hermit behind the screen."

"Why, you must have seen your cousin Gordon as you came into the room."

"But you forget I don't know him by sight. However, there was no one in the room when I entered; a little later some others came in, for I heard a faint buzz, like that of persons talking in a whisper. However, I was no eavesdropper, as a person behind a screen is on the dramatic stage."

This was true. Even had Gordon and Danvers talked in a louder tone, Kenelm had been too absorbed in his own thoughts to have heard a word of their conversation.

"You ought to know young Gordon; he is a very clever fellow, and has an ambition to enter Parliament. I hope no old family quarrel between his bear of a father and dear Sir Peter will make you object to meet him."

"Sir Peter is the most forgiving of men, but he would scarcely forgive me if I declined to meet a cousin who had never offended him."

"Well said. Come and meet Gordon at breakfast to-morrow—ten o'clock. I am still in the old rooms."

While the kinsmen thus conversed, Lady Glenalvon had seated herself on the couch beside Kenelm, and was quietly observing his countenance. Now she spoke: "My dear Mr. Mivers, you will have many opportunities of talking with Kenelm; do not grudge me five minutes' talk with him how."

"I leave your ladyship alone in your hermitage. How all the men in this assembly will envy the hermit!"

CHAPTER II.

"I AM glad to see you once more in the world," said Lady Glenalvon, "and I trust that you are now prepared to take that part in it, which ought to be no mean one if you do justice to your talents and your nature."

KENELM.—"When you go to the theatre, and see one of the pieces which appear now to be the fashion, which would you rather be—an actor or a looker-on?"

LADY GLENALVON.—"My dear young friend, your question saddens me." (After a pause.) —"But though I used a stage metaphor when I expressed my hope that you would take no mean part in the world, the world is not really a theatre. Life admits of no lookers-on. Speak to me frankly, as you used to do. Your face retains its old melancholy expression. Are you not happy?"

KENELM.—"Happy, as mortals go, I ought to be. I do not think I am unhappy. If my temper be melancholic, melancholy has a happiness of its own. Milton shows that there are as many charms in life to be found on the Penseroso side of it as there are on the Allegro."

LADY GLENALVON.—"Kenelm, you saved the life of my poor son, and when, later, he was taken from me, I felt as if he had commended you to my care. When at the age of sixteen, with a boy's years and a man's heart, you came to London, did I not try to be to you almost as a mother? and did you not often tell me that you could confide to me the secrets of your heart more readily than to any other?"

"You were to me," said Kenelm, with emotion, "that most precious and sustaining good genius which a youth can find at the threshold of life—a woman gently wise, kindly sympathizing, shaming him by the spectacle of her own purity from all grosser errors, elevating him from mean tastes and objects by the exquisite ineffable loftiness of soul which is only found in the noblest order of womanhood. Come, I will open my heart to you still. I fear it is more wayward than ever. It still feels estranged from the companionship and pursuits natural to my age and station. However, I have been seeking to brace and harden my nature, for the practical ends of life, by travel and adventure, chiefly among rougher varieties of mankind than we meet in drawing-rooms. Now, in compliance with the duty I owe to my dear father's wishes, I come back to these circles, which under your auspices I entered in boyhood, and which even then seemed to me so inane and artificial. Take a part in the world

of these circles; such is your wish. My answer is brief. I have been doing my best to acquire a motive power, and I have not succeeded. I see nothing that I care to strive for, nothing that I care to gain. The very times in which we live are to me as to Hamlet—out of joint; and I am not born like Hamlet to set them right. Ah! if I could look on society through the spectacles with which the poor hidalgo in 'Gil Blas' looked on his meagre board—spectacles by which cherries appear the size of peaches, and tomtits as large as turkeys! The imagination which is necessary to ambition is a great magnifier."

"I have known more than one man, now very eminent, very active, who at your age felt the same estrangement from the practical pursuits of others."

"And what reconciled those men to such pursuits?"

"That diminished sense of individual personality, that unconscious fusion of one's own being into other existences, which belong to home and marriage."

"I don't object to home, but I do to marriage."

"Depend on it there is no home for man where there is no woman."

"Prettily said. In that case I resign the home."

"Do you mean seriously to tell me that you never see the woman you could love enough to make her your wife, and never enter any home that you do not quit with a touch of envy at the happiness of married life?"

"Seriously, I never see such a woman; seriously, I never enter such a home."

"Patience, then; your time will come, and I hope it is at hand. Listen to me. It was only yesterday that I felt an indescribable longing to see you again—to know your address that I might write to you; for yesterday, when a certain young lady left my house, after a week's visit, I said, this girl would make a perfect wife, and, above all, the exact wife to suit Kenelm Chillingly."

"Kenelm Chillingly is very glad to hear that this young lady has left your house."

"But she has not left London—she is here to-night. She only stayed with me till her father came to town, and the house he had taken for the season was vacant; those events happened yesterday."

"Fortunate events for me: they permit me to call on you without danger."

"Have you no curiosity to know, at least, who and what is the young lady who appears to me so well suited to you?"

"No curiosity, but a vague sensation of alarm."

"Well, I cannot talk pleasantly with you while you are in this irritating mood, and it is time to quit the hermitage. Come, there are many persons here with some of whom you should renew old acquaintance, and to some of whom I should like to make you known."

"I am prepared to follow Lady Glenalvon wherever she deigns to lead me—except to the altar with another."

CHAPTER III.

THE rooms were now full—not over-crowded, but full—and it was rarely even in that house that so many distinguished persons were collected together. A young man thus honored by so *grande* a *dame* as Lady Glenalvon, could not but be cordially welcomed by all to whom she presented him, Ministers and Parliamentary leaders, ball-givers and beauties in vogue—even authors and artists; and there was something in Kenelm Chillingly, in his striking countenance and figure, in that calm ease of manner natural to his indifference to effect, which seemed to justify the favors shown to him by the brilliant princess of fashion, and mark him out for general observation.

The first evening of his reintroduction to the polite world was a success which few young men of his years achieve. He produced a sensation. Just as the rooms were thinning, Lady Glenalvon whispered to Kenelm—

"Come this way—there is one person I must reintroduce you to—thank me for it hereafter."

Kenelm followed the Marchioness, and found himself face to face with Cecilia Travers. She was leaning on her father's arm, looking very handsome, and her beauty was heightened by the blush which overspread her cheeks as Kenelm Chillingly approached.

Travers greeted him with great cordiality; and Lady Glenalvon asking him to escort her

to the refreshment-room, Kenelm had no option but to offer his arm to Cecilia.

Kenelm felt somewhat embarrassed. "Have you been long in town, Miss Travers?"

"A little more than a week, but we only settled into our house yesterday."

"Ah, indeed! were you then the young lady who—" He stopped short, and his face grew gentler and graver in its expression.

"The young lady who—what?" asked Cecilia, with a smile.

"Who has been staying with Lady Glenalvon?"

"Yes; did she tell you?"

"She did not mention your name, but praised that young lady so justly that I ought to have guessed it."

Cecilia made some not very audible answer, and on entering the refreshment-room other young men gathered round her, and Lady Glenalvon and Kenelm remained silent in the midst of a general small-talk. When Travers, after giving his address to Kenelm, and, of course, pressing him to call, left the house with Cecilia, Kenelm said to Lady Glenalvon, musingly, "So that is the young lady in whom I was to see my fate: you knew that we had met before?"

"Yes, she told me when and where. Besides, it is not two years since you wrote to me from her father's house. Do you forget?"

"Ah," said Kenelm, so abstractedly that he seemed to be dreaming, "no man with his eyes open rushes on his fate; when he does so, his sight is gone. Love is blind. They say the blind are very happy, yet I never met a blind man who would not recover his sight if he could."

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Chillingly Mivers never gave a dinner at his own rooms. When he did give a dinner it was at Greenwich or Richmond. But he gave breakfast-parties pretty often, and they were considered pleasant. He had handsome bachelor apartments in Grosvenor Street, daintily furnished, with a prevalent air of exquisite neatness. A good library stored with books of reference, and adorned with presentation copies from authors of the day, very beautifully bound. Though the room served for the study of the professed man of letters, it had none of the untidy litter which generally characterizes the study of one whose vocation it is to deal with books and papers. Even the implements for writing were not apparent, except when required. They lay concealed in a vast cylinder bureau, French made, and French polished. Within that bureau were numerous pigeonholes and secret drawers, and a profound well with a separate patent lock. In the well were deposited the articles intended for publication in 'The Londoner'—proofsheets, etc.; pigeonholes were devoted to ordinary correspondence; secret drawers to confidential notes, and outlines of biographies of eminent men now living, but intended to be completed for publication the day after their death.

No man wrote such funeral compositions with a livelier pen than that of Chillingly Mivers; and the large and miscellaneous circle of his visiting acqnaintances allowed him to ascertain, whether by authoritative report or by personal observation, the signs of mortal disease in the illustrious friends whose dinners he accepted, and whose failing pulses he instinctively felt in returning the pressure of their hands, so that he was often able to put the finishing-stroke to their obituary memorial, days, weeks, even months, before their fate took the public by surprise. That cylinder bureau was in harmony with the secrecy in which this remarkable man shrouded the productions of his brain. In his literary life Mivers had no "I;" there he was ever the inscrutable, mysterious "We." He was only "I" when you met him in the world, and called him Mivers.

Adjoining the library on one side was a small dining or rather breakfast room, hung with valuable pictures—presents from living painters. Many of these painters had been severely handled by Mr. Mivers in his existence as "We,"—not always in 'The Londoner.' His most pungent criticisms were often contributed to other intellectual journals, conducted by members of the same intellectual clique. Painters knew not how contemptuously "We" had treated them when they met Mr. Mivers. His "I" was so complimentary that they sent him a tribute of their gratitude.

On the other side was his drawing-room, also enriched by many gifts, chiefly from fair

hands—embroidered cushions and table-covers, bits of Sèvres or old Chelsea, elegant knick-knacks of all kinds. Fashionable authoresses paid great court to Mr. Mivers; and in the course of his life as a single man, he had other female adorers besides fashionable authoresses.

Mr. Mivers had already returned from his early constitutional walk in the Park, and was now seated by the cylinder *sécrétaire* with a mild-looking man, who was one of the most merciless contributors to 'The Londoner,' and no unimportant councillor in the oligarchy of the clique that went by the name of the "Intellectuals."

"Well," said Mivers, languidly, "I can't even get through the book; it is as dull as the country in November. But, as you justly say, the writer is an 'Intellectual,' and a clique would be anything but intellectual if it did not support its members. Review the book yourself—mind and make the dulness of it the signal proof of its merit. Say—'To the ordinary class of readers this exquisite work may appear less brilliant than the flippant smartness of'—any other author you like to name; 'but to the well-educated and intelligent every line is pregnant with,' etc., etc. By the way, when we come by-and-by to review the exhibition at Burlington House, there is one painter whom we must try our best to crush. I have not seen his pictures myself, but he is a new man, and our friend, who has seen him, is terribly jealous of him, and says that if the good judges do not put him down at once, the villainous taste of the public will set him up as a prodigy. A low-lived fellow too, I hear. There is the name of the man and the subject of the pictures. See to it when the time comes. Meanwhile, prepare the way for onslaught on the pictures by occasional sneers at the painter." Mr. Mivers here took out of his cylinder a confidential note from the jealous rival and handed it to his mild-looking *confrère;* then rising, he said, "I fear we must suspend business till to-morrow; I expect two young cousins to breakfast."

As soon as the mild-looking man was gone, Mr. Mivers sauntered to his drawing-room window, amiably offering a lump of sugar to a canary-bird sent him as a present the day before, and who, in the gilded cage which made part of the present, scanned him suspiciously, and refused the sugar.

Time had remained very gentle in its dealings with Chillingly Mivers. He scarcely looked a day older than when he was first presented to the reader on the birth of his kinsman Kenelm. He was reaping the fruit of his own sage maxims. Free from whiskers and safe in wig, there was no sign of gray—no suspicion of dye. Superiority to passion, abnegation of sorrow, indulgence of amusement, avoidance of excess, had kept away the crow's-feet, preserved the elasticity of his frame and the unflushed clearness of his gentlemanlike complexion. The door opened, and a well-dressed valet, who had lived long enough with Mivers to grow very much like him, announced Mr. Chillingly Gordon.

"Good morning," said Mivers; "I was much pleased to see you talking so long and so familiarly with Danvers: others, of course, observed it, and it added a step to your career. It does you great good to be seen in a drawing-room talking apart with a Somebody. But may I ask if the talk itself was satisfactory?"

"Not at all: Danvers throws cold water on the notion of Saxboro', and does not even hint that his party will help me to any other opening. Party has few openings at its disposal nowadays for any young man. The school-master being abroad has swept away the school for statesmen as he has swept away the school for actors—an evil, and an evil of a far graver consequence to the destines of the nation than any good likely to be got from the system that succeeded it."

"But it is of no use railing against things that can't be helped. If I were you, I would postpone all ambition of Parliament, and read for the bar."

"The advice is sound, but too unpalatable to be taken. I am resolved to find a seat in the House, and where there is a will there is a way."

"I am not so sure of that."

"But I am."

"Judging by what your contemporaries at the University tell me of your speeches at the Debating Society, you were not then an ultra-Radical. But it is only an ultra-Radical who has a chance of success at Saxboro'."

"I am no fanatic in politics. There is much to be said on all sides—*cæteris paribus*, I prefer the winning side to the losing: nothing succeeds like success."

"Ay, but in politics there is always reaction. The winning side one day may be the losing side another. The losing side represents a minority, and a minority is sure to comprise more intellect than a majority: in the long-run intellect will force its way, get a majority and then lose it, because with a majority it will become stupid."

"Cousin Mivers, does not the history of the world show you that a single individual can upset all theories as to the comparative wisdom of the few or the many? Take the wisest few you can find, and one man of genius not a tithe so wise crushes them into powder. But then that man of genius, though he despises the many, must make use of them. That done, he rules them. Don't you see how in free countries political destinations resolve themselves into individual impersonations? At a general election it is one name around which electors rally. The candidate may enlarge as much as he pleases on political principles, but all his talk will not win him votes enough for success, unless he says, 'I go with Mr. A.,' the Minister, or with Mr. Z., the chief of the Opposition. It was not the Tories who beat the Whigs when Mr. Pitt dissolved Parliament. It was Mr. Pitt who beat Mr. Fox, with whom in general political principles—salve-trade, Roman Catholic emancipation, Parliamentary reform—he certainly agreed much more than he did with any man in his own Cabinet."

"Take care, my young cousin," cried Mivers, in accents of alarm; "don't set up for a man of genius. Genius is the worst quality a public man can have nowadays—nobody heeds it, and everybody is jealous of it."

"Pardon me, you mistake; my remark was purely objective, and intended as a reply to your argument. I prefer at present to go with the many because it is the winning side. If we then want a man of genius to keep it the winning side, by subjugating its partisans to his will, he will be sure to come. The few will drive him to us, for the few are always the enemies of the one man of genius. It is they who distrust—it is they who are jealous—not the many. You have allowed your judgment, usually so clear, to be somewhat dimmed by your experience as a critic. The critics are the *few*. They have infinitely more culture than the many. But when a man of real genius appears and asserts himself, the critics are seldom such fair judges of him as the many are. If he be not one of their oligarchical clique, they either abuse, or disparage, or affect to ignore him; though a time at last comes when, having gained the many, the critics acknowledge him. But the difference between the man of action and the author is this, that the author rarely finds this acknowledgment till he is dead, and it is necessary to the man of action to enforce it while he is alive. But enough of this speculation: you ask me to meet Kenelm—is he not coming?"

"Yes, but I did not ask him till ten o'clock. I asked you at half-past nine, because I wished to hear about Danvers and Saxboro', and also to prepare you somewhat for your introduction to your cousin. I must be brief as to the last, for it is only five minutes to the hour, and he is a man likely to be punctual. Kenelm is in all ways your opposite. I don't know whether he is cleverer or less clever—there is no scale of measurement between you; but he is wholly void of ambition, and might possibly assist yours. He can do what he likes with Sir Peter; and considering how your poor father—a worthy man, but cantankerous—harassed and persecuted Sir Peter, because Kenelm came between the estate and you, it is probable that Sir Peter bears you a grudge, though Kenelm declares him incapable of it; and it would be well if you could annul that grudge in the father by conciliating the goodwill of the son."

"I should be glad so to annul it: but what is Kenelm's weak side?—the turf? the hunting-field? women? poetry? One can only conciliate a man by getting on his weak side."

"Hist! I see him from the windows. Kenelm's weak side was, when I knew him some years ago, and I rather fancy it still is——"

"Well, make haste! I hear his ring at your door-bell."

"A passionate longing to find ideal truth in real life."

"Ah!" said Gordon, "as I thought—a mere dreamer."

CHAPTER V.

KENELM entered the room. The young cousins were introduced, shook hands, receded a step, and gazed at each other. It is scarcely

possible to conceive a greater contrast outwardly than that between the two Chillingly representatives of the rising generation. Each was silently impressed by the sense of that contrast. Each felt that the contrast implied antagonism, and that if they two met in the same arena it must be as rival combatants; still, by some mysterious intuition each felt a certain respect for the other, each divined in the other a power that he could not fairly estimate, but against which his own power would be strongly tasked to contend. So might exchange looks a thorough-bred deer-hound and a half-bred mastiff: the bystander could scarcely doubt which was the nobler animal, but he might hesitate which to bet on, if the two came to deadly quarrel. Meanwhile the thorough-bred deer-hound and the half-bred mastiff sniffed at each other in polite salutation. Gordon was the first to give tongue.

"I have long wished to know you personally," said he, throwing into his voice and manner that delicate kind of deference which a well-born cadet owes to the destined head of his house. "I cannot conceive how I missed you last night at Lady Beaumanoir's, where Mivers tells me he met you; but I left early."

Here Mivers led the way to the breakfast-room, and there seated, the host became the principal talker, running with lively glibness over the principal topics of the day—the last scandal, the last new book, the reform of the army, the reform of the turf, the critical state of Spain, and the *début* of an Italian singer. He seemed an embodied Journal, including the Leading Article, the Law Reports, Foreign Intelligence, the Court Circular, down to the Births, Deaths, and Marriages. Gordon from time to time interrupted this flow of soul with brief, trenchant remarks, which evinced his own knowledge of the subjects treated, and a habit of looking on all subjects connected with the pursuits and business of mankind from a high ground appropriated to himself, and through the medium of that blue glass which conveys a wintry aspect to summer landscapes. Kenelm said little, but listened attentively.

The conversation arrested its discursive nature, to settle upon a political chief—the highest in fame and station of that party to which Mivers professed—not to belong, he belonged to himself alone—but to appropinquate. Mivers spoke of this chief with the greatest distrust, and in a spirit of general depreciation. Gordon acquiesced in the distrust and the depreciation, adding—"But he is master of the position, and must, of course, be supported through thick and thin for the present."

"Yes, for the present," said Mivers; "one has no option. But you will see some clever articles in 'The Londoner' towards the close of the session, which will damage him greatly, by praising him in the wrong place, and deepening the alarm of important followers—an alarm now at work, though suppressed."

Here Kenelm asked, in humble tones, "Why Gordon thought that a Minister he considered so untrustworthy and dangerous must, for the present, be supported through thick and thin."

"Because at present a member elected so to support him, would lose his seat if he did not: needs must when the devil drives."

KENELM.—"When the devil drives, I should have thought it better to resign one's seat on the coach; perhaps one might be of some use, out of it, in helping to put on the drag."

MIVERS.—"Cleverly said, Kenelm. But, metaphor apart, Gordon is right: a young politician must go with his party; a veteran journalist like myself is more independent. So long as the journalist blames everybody, he will have plenty of readers."

Kenelm made no reply, and Gordon changed the conversation from men to measures. He spoke of some Bills before Parliament with remarkable ability, evincing much knowledge of the subject, much critical acuteness, illustrating their defects, and proving the danger of their ultimate consequences.

Kenelm was greatly struck with the vigor of this cold, clear mind, and owned to himself that the House of Commons was a fitting place for its development.

"But," said Mivers, "would you not be obliged to defend these Bills if you were member for Saxboro'?"

"Before I answer your question, answer me this. Dangerous as the Bills are, is it not necessary that they shall pass? Have not the public so resolved?"

"There can be no doubt of that."

"Then the member for Saxboro' cannot be strong enough to go against the public."

"Progress of the age!" said Kenelm, musingly. "Do you think the class of gentlemen will long last in England?"

"What do you call gentlemen? The aristocracy by birth?—the *gentilhommes?*"

"Nay, I suppose no laws can take away a man's ancestors, and a class of well-born men is not to be exterminated. But a mere class of well-born men—without duties, responsibilities, or sentiment of that which becomes good birth in devotion to country or individual honor—does no good to a nation. It is a misfortune which statesmen of democratic creed ought to recognize, that the class of the well-born cannot be destroyed—it must remain as it remained in Rome and remains in France, after all efforts to extirpate it, as the most dangerous class of citizens when you deprive it of the attributes which made it the most serviceable. I am not speaking of that class; I speak of that unclassified order peculiar to England, which, no doubt, forming itself originally from the ideal standard of honor and truth supposed to be maintained by the *gentilhommes*, or well-born, no longer requires pedigrees and acres to confer upon its members the designation of gentlemen; and when I hear a 'gentleman' say that he has no option but to think one thing and say another, at whatever risk to his country, I feel as if in the progress of the age the class of gentlemen was about to be superseded by some finer development of species."

Therewith Kenelm rose, and would have taken his departure, if Gordon had not seized his hand and detained him.

"My dear cousin, if I may so call you," he said, with the frank manner which was usual to him, and which suited well the bold expression of his face and the clear ring of his voice—"I am one of those who, from an over-dislike to sentimentality and cant, often make those not intimately acquainted with them think worse of their principles than they deserve. It may be quite true that a man who goes with his party dislikes the measures he feels bound to support, and says so openly when among friends and relations, yet that man is not therefore devoid of loyalty and honor; and I trust, when you know me better, you will not think it likely I should derogate from that class of gentlemen to which we both belong."

"Pardon me if I seemed rude," answered Kenelm; "ascribe it to my ignorance of the necessities of public life. It struck me that where a politician thought a thing evil, he ought not to support it as good. But I dare say I am mistaken."

"Entirely mistaken," said Mivers, "and for this reason: in politics formerly there was a direct choice between good and evil. That rarely exists now. Men of high education having to choose whether to accept or reject a measure forced upon their option by constituent bodies of very low education, are called upon to weigh evil against evil—the evil of accepting or the evil of rejecting; and if they resolve on the first, it is as the lesser evil of the two."

"Your definition is perfect," said Gordon, "and I am contented to rest on it my excuse for what my cousin deems insincerity."

"I suppose that is real life," said Kenelm, with his mournful smile.

"Of course it is," said Mivers.

"Every day I live," sighed Kenelm, "still more confirms my conviction that real life is a phantasmal sham. How absurd it is in philosophers to deny the existence of apparitions! what apparitions we, living men, must seem to the ghosts!

"'The spirits of the wise
Sit in the clouds and mock us.'"

CHAPTER VI.

CHILLINGLY GORDON did not fail to confirm his acquaintance with Kenelm. He very often looked in upon him of a morning, sometimes joined him in his afternoon rides, introduced him to men of his own set who were mostly busy members of Parliament, rising barristers, or political journalists, but not without a proportion of brilliant idlers—club men, sporting men, men of fashion, rank, and fortune. He did so with a purpose, for these persons spoke well of him—spoke well not only of his talents, but of his honorable character. His general nickname amongst them was "HONEST GORDON." Kenelm at first thought this *sobriquet* must be ironical; not a bit of it. It was given to him on account of the candor and boldness with which he expressed opinions embodying that sort of cynicism which is vulgarly called "the absence of humbug." The man was certainly no hypocrite; he affected no beliefs which he did not entertain. And he had very

few beliefs in anything, except the first half of the adage, "Every man for himself,—and God for us all."

But whatever Chillingly Gordon's theoretical disbeliefs in things which make the current creed of the virtuous, there was nothing in his conduct which evinced predilection for vices: he was strictly upright in all his dealings, and in delicate matters of honor was a favorite umpire amongst his coevals. Though so frankly ambitious, no one could accuse him of attempting to climb on the shoulders of patrons. There was nothing servile in his nature, and though he was perfectly prepared to bribe electors if necessary, no money could have bought himself. His one master-passion was the desire of power. He sneered at patriotism as a worn-out prejudice, at philanthropy as a sentimental catch-word. He did not want to serve his country, but to rule it. He did not want to raise mankind, but to rise himself. He was therefore unscrupulous, unprincipled, as hungerers after power for itself too often are; yet still if he got power he would probably use it well, from the clearness and strength of his mental perceptions. The impression he made on Kenelm may be seen in the following letter:—

TO SIR PETER CHILLINGLY, BART., ETC.

"My dear Father,—You and my dear mother will be pleased to hear that London continues very polite to me: that 'arida nutrix leonum' enrols me among the pet class of lions which ladies of fashion admit into the society of their lap-dogs. It is somewhere about six years since I was allowed to gaze on this peep-show through the loopholes of Mr. Welby's retreat. It appears to me, perhaps erroneously, that even within that short space of time the tone of 'society' is perceptibly changed. That the change is for the better is an assertion I leave to those who belong to the *progressista* party.

"I don't think nearly so many young ladies six years ago painted their eye-lids and dyed their hair: a few of them there might be, imitators of the slang invented by school-boys and circulated through the medium of small novelists; they might use such expressions as 'stunning,' 'cheek,' 'awfully jolly,' etc. But now I find a great many who have advanced to a slang beyond that of verbal expressions,—a slang of mind, a slang of sentiment, a slang in which very little seems left of the woman, and nothing at all of the lady.

"Newspaper essayists assert that the young men of the day are to blame for this; that the young men like it; and the fair husband-anglers dress their flies in the colors most likely to attract a nibble. Whether this excuse be the true one I cannot pretend to judge. But it strikes me that the men about my own age who affect to be fast are a more languid race than the men from ten to twenty years older, whom they regard as *slow*. The habit of dram-drinking in the morning is a very new idea, an idea greatly in fashion at the moment. Adonis calls for a 'pick-me-up' before he has strength enough to answer a *billet-doux* from Venus. Adonis has not the strength to get nobly drunk, but his delicate constitution requires stimulants, and he is always tippling.

"The men of high birth or renown for social success, belonging, my dear father, to your time, are still distinguished by an air of good-breeding, by a style of conversation more or less polished and not without evidences of literary culture, from men of the same rank in my generation, who appear to pride themselves on respecting nobody and knowing nothing, not even grammar. Still we are assured that the world goes on steadily improving. *That* new idea is in full vigor.

"Society in the concrete has become wonderfully conceited as to its own progressive excellences, and the individuals who form the concrete entertain the same complacent opinion of themselves. There are, of course, even in my brief and imperfect experience, many exceptions to what appear to me the prevalent characteristics of the rising generation in 'society.' Of these exceptions I must content myself with naming the most remarkable. *Place aux dames*, the first I name is Cecilia Travers. She and her father are now in town, and I meet them frequently. I can conceive no civilized era in the world which a woman like Cecilia Travers would not grace and adorn, because she is essentially the type of woman as man likes to imagine woman —viz., on the fairest side of the womanly character. And I say 'woman' rather than girl, because among 'Girls of the Period' Cecilia Travers cannot be classed.

"You might call her damsel, virgin, maiden,

but you could no more call her girl than you could call a well-born French demoiselle '*fille.*' She is handsome enough to please the eye of any man, however fastidious, but not that kind of beauty which dazzles all men too much to fascinate one man; for — speaking, thank Heaven, from mere theory—I apprehend that the love for woman has in it a strong sense of property; that one requires to individualize one's possession as being wholly one's own, and not a possession which all the public are invited to admire. I can readily understand how a rich man, who has what is called a show place, in which the splendid rooms and the stately gardens are open to all inspectors, so that he has no privacy in his own demesnes, runs away to a pretty cottage which he has all to himself, and of which he can say, '*This* is Home—*this* is all mine.'

"But there are some kinds of beauty which are eminently show places—which the public think they have as much a right to admire as the owner has; and the show place itself would be dull, and perhaps fall out of repair, if the public could be excluded from the sight of it.

"The beauty of Cecilia Travers is not that of a show place. There is a feeling of safety in her. If Desdemona had been like her, Othello would not have been jealous. But then Cecilia would not have deceived her father—nor I think have told a blackamoor that she wished 'Heaven had made her such a man.' Her mind harmonizes with her person —it is a companionable mind. Her talents are not showy, but, take them altogether, they form a pleasant whole: she has good sense enough in the practical affairs of life, and enough of that ineffable womanly gift called tact to counteract the effects of whimsical natures like mine, and yet enough sense of the humoristic views of life not to take too literally all that a whimsical man like myself may say. As to temper, one never knows what a woman's temper is—till one puts her out of it. But I imagine hers in its normal state, to be serene, and disposed to be cheerful. Now, my dear father, if you were not one of the cleverest of men you would infer from this eulogistic mention of Cecilia Travers that I was in love with her. But you no doubt will detect the truth, that a man in love with a woman does not weigh her merits with so steady a hand as that which guides this steel pen. I am not in love with Cecilia Travers. I wish I were. When Lady Glenalvon, who remains wonderfully kind to me, says, day after day, 'Cecilia Travers would make you a perfect wife,' I have no answer to give, but I don't feel the least inclined to ask Cecilia Travers if she would waste her perfection on one who so coldly concedes it.

"I find that she persisted in rejecting the man whom her father wished her to marry, and that he has consoled himself by marrying somebody else. No doubt other suitors as worthy will soon present themselves.

"Oh, dearest of all my friends—sole friend whom I regard as a confidant—shall I ever be in love? and if not, why not? Sometimes I feel as if, with love as with ambition, it is because I have some impossible ideal in each, that I must always remain indifferent to the sort of love and the sort of ambition which are within my reach. I have an idea that if I did love, I should love as intensely as Romeo, and that thought inspires me with vague forebodings of terror; and if I did find an object to arouse my ambition, I could be as earnest in its pursuit as—whom shall I name?—Cæsar or Cato? I like Cato's ambition the better of the two. But people nowadays call ambition an impracticable crotchet, if it be invested on the losing side. Cato would have saved Rome from the mob and the dictator; but Rome could not be saved, and Cato falls on his own sword. Had we a Cato now the verdict at a coroner's inquest would be, 'suicide while in a state of unsound mind;' and the verdict would have been proved by his senseless resistance to a mob and a dictator! Talking of ambition, I come to the other exception to the youth of the day—I have named a *demoiselle*, I now name a *damoiseau.* Imagine a man of about five-and-twenty, and who is morally about fifty years older than a healthy man of sixty,—imagine him with the brain of age and the flower of youth—with a heart absorbed into the brain, and giving warm blood to frigid ideas —a man who sneers at everything I call lofty, yet would do nothing that *he* thinks mean—to whom vice and virtue are as indifferent as they were to the Æsthetics of Goethe—who would never jeopardize his career as a practical reasoner by an imprudent virtue, and never sully his reputation by a degrading vice. Imagine this man with an intellect keen, strong, ready, unscrupulous, dauntless—all cleverness and no

genius. Imagine this man, and then do not be astonished when I tell you he is a Chillingly.

"The Chillingly race culminates in him, and becomes Chillinglyest. In fact, it seems to me that we live in a day precisely suited to the Chillingly idiosyncrasies. During the ten centuries or more that our race has held local habitation and a name, it has been as airy nothings. Its representatives lived in hot-blooded times, and were compelled to skulk in still water with their emblematic Daces. But the times now, my dear father, are so cold-blooded that you can't be too cold-blooded to prosper. What could Chillingly Mivers have been in an age when people cared twopence-halfpenny about their religious creeds, and their political parties deemed their cause was sacred, and their leaders were heroes? Chillingly Mivers would not have found five subscribers to 'The Londoner.' But now 'The Londoner' is the favorite organ of the intellectual public; it sneers away all the foundations of the social system, without an attempt at reconstruction; and every new journal set up, if it keep its head above water, models itself on 'The Londoner.' Chillingly Mivers is a great man, and the most potent writer of the age, though nobody knows what he has written. Chillingly Gordon is a still more notable instance of the rise of the Chillingly worth in the modern market.

"There is a general impression in the most authoritative circles that Chillingly Gordon will have high rank in the van of the coming men. His confidence in himself is so thorough that it infects all with whom he comes into contact —myself included.

"He said to me the other day, with a *sang-froid* worthy of the iciest Chillingly, 'I mean to be Prime Minister of England—it is only a question of time.' Now, if Chillingly Gordon is to be Prime Minister, it will be because the increasing cold of our moral and social atmosphere will exactly suit the development of his talents.

"He is the man above all others to argue down the declaimer of old-fashioned sentimentalities, love of country, care for its position among nations, zeal for its honor, pride in its renown. (Oh, if you could hear him philosophically and logically sneer away the word 'prestige!') Such notions are fast being classified as 'bosh.' And when that classification is complete—when England has no colonies to defend, no navy to pay for, no interest in the affairs of other nations, and has attained to the happy condition of Holland,—then Chillingly Gordon will be her Prime Minister.

"Yet while, if ever I am stung into political action, it will be by abnegation of the Chillingly attributes, and in opposition, however hopeless, to Chillingly Gordon, I feel that this man cannot be suppressed and ought to have fair play; his ambition will be infinitely more dangerous if it become soured by delay. I propose, my dear father, that you should have the honor of laying this clever kinsman under an obligation, and enabling him to enter Parliament. In our last conversation at Exmundham, you told me of the frank resentment of Gordon *père*, when my coming into the world shut him out from the Exmundham inheritance; you confided to me your intention at that time to lay by yearly a sum that might ultimately serve as a provision for Gordon *fils*, and as some compensation for the loss of his expectations when you realized your hope of an heir; you told me also how this generous intention on your part had been frustrated by a natural indignation at the elder Gordon's conduct in his harassing and costly litigation and by the addition you had been tempted to make to the estate in a purchase which added to its acreage, but at a rate of interest which diminished your own income, and precluded the possibility of further savings. Now, chancing to meet your lawyer, Mr. Vining, the other day, I learned from him that it had been long a wish which your delicacy prevented your naming to me, that I, to whom the fee-simple descends, should join with you in cutting off the entail and resettling the estate. He showed me what an advantage this would be to the property, because it would leave your hands free for many improvements in which I heartily go with the progress of the age, for which, as merely tenant for life, you could not raise the money except upon ruinous terms; new cottages for laborers, new buildings for tenants, the consolidation of some old mortgages and charges on the rent-roll, etc. And allow me to add that I should like to make a large increase to the jointure of my dear mother. Vining says, too, that there is a part of the outlying land which, as being near a town, could be sold

to considerable profit if the estate were re-settled.

"Let us hasten to complete the necessary deeds, and so obtain the £20,000 required for the realization of your noble, and let me add, your just desire to do something for Chillingly Gordon. In the new deeds of settlement we could insure the power of willing the estate as we pleased, and I am strongly against devising it to Chillingly Gordon. It may be a crotchet of mine, but one which I think you share, that the owner of English soil should have a son's love for the native land, and Gordon will never have that. I think, too, that it will be best for his own career and for the establishment of a frank understanding between us and himself, that he should be fairly told that he would not be benefited in the event of our deaths. Twenty thousand pounds given to him now would be a greater boon to him than ten times the sum twenty years later. With that at his command, he can enter Parliament, and have an income, added to what he now possesses, if modest, still sufficient to make him independent of a Minister's patronage.

"Pray humor me, my dearest father, in the proposition I venture to submit to you.—Your affectionate son,

"KENELM."

FROM SIR PETER CHILLINGLY TO KENELM CHILLINGLY.

"MY DEAR BOY,—You are not worthy to be a Chillingly; you are decidedly warm-blooded: never was a load lifted off a man's mind with a gentler hand. Yes, I have wished to cut off the entail and resettle the property; but as it was eminently to my advantage to do so, I shrank from asking it, though eventually it would be almost as much to your own advantage. What with the purchase I made of the Faircleuch lands—which I could only effect by money borrowed at high interest on my personal security, and paid off by yearly instalments, eating largely into income—and the old mortgages, etc., I own I have been pinched of late years. But what rejoices me the most is the power to make homes for our honest laborers more comfortable, and nearer to their work, which last is the chief point, for the old cottages in themselves are not bad; the misfortune is, when you build an extra room for the children, the silly people let it out to a lodger.

"My dear boy, I am very much touched by your wish to increase your mother's jointure—a very proper wish, independently of filial feeling, for she brought to the estate a very pretty fortune, which the trustees consented to my investing in land; and though the land completed our ring-fence, it does not bring in two per cent., and the conditions of the entail limited the right of jointure to an amount below that which a widowed Lady Chillingly may fairly expect.

"I care more about the provision on these points than I do for the interests of old Chillingly Gordon's son. I had meant to behave very handsomely to the father; and when the return for behaving handsomely is being put into Chancery—A Worm Will Turn. Nevertheless, I agree with you that a son should not be punished for his father's faults; and if the sacrifice of £20,000 makes you and myself feel that we are better Christians and truer gentlemen, we shall buy that feeling very cheaply."

Sir Peter then proceeded, half-jestingly, half-seriously, to combat Kenelm's declaration that he was not in love with Cecilia Travers; and, urging the advantages of marriage with one whom Kenelm allowed would be a perfect wife, astutely remarked, that unless Kenelm had a son of his own, it did not seem to him quite just to the next of kin to will the property from him, upon no better plea than the want of love for his native country. "He would love his country fast enough if he had 10,000 acres in it."

Kenelm shook his head when he came to this sentence.

"Is even, then, love for one's country but cup-board love after all?" said he; and he postponed finishing the perusal of his father's letter.

CHAPTER VII.

KENELM CHILLINGLY did not exaggerate the social position he had acquired when he classed himself amongst the lions of the fashionable world. I dare not count the number of three-cornered notes showered upon him by the fine ladies who grow romantic upon any kind of celebrity; or the carefully-sealed envelopes, containing letters from fair anonymas, who asked if he

had a heart, and would be in such a place in the Park at such an hour. What there was in Kenelm Chillingly that should make him thus favored, especially by the fair sex, it would be difficult to say, unless it was the two-fold reputation of being unlike other people, and of being unaffectedly indifferent to the gain of any reputation at all. He might, had he so pleased, have easily established a proof that the prevalent though vague belief in his talents was not altogether unjustified. For the articles he had sent from abroad to 'The Londoner,' and by which his travelling expenses were defrayed, had been stamped by that sort of originality in tone and treatment which rarely fails to excite curiosity as to the author, and meets with more general praise than perhaps it deserves.

But Mivers was true to his contract to preserve inviolable the incognito of the author and Kenelm regarded with profound contempt the articles themselves, and the readers who praised them.

Just as misanthropy with some persons grows out of benevolence disappointed, so there are certain natures—and Kenelm Chillingly's was perhaps one of them—in which indifferentism grows out of earnestness baffled.

He had promised himself pleasure in renewing acquaintance with his old tutor, Mr. Welby—pleasure in refreshing his own taste for metaphysics and casuistry and criticism. But that accomplished professor of realizm had retired from philosophy altogether, and was now enjoying a holiday for life in the business of a public office. A Minister in favor of whom, when in opposition, Mr. Welby, in a moment of whim, wrote some very able articles in a leading journal, had, on acceding to power, presented the realist with one of those few good things still left to Ministerial patronage—a place worth about £1200 a-year. His mornings thus engaged in routine work, Mr. Welby enjoyed his evenings in a convival way.

"*Inveni portum*," he said to Kenelm; "I plunge into no troubled waters now. But come and dine with me to-morrow, *tête-à-tête*. My wife is at St. Leonard's with my youngest born for the benefit of sea-air." Kenelm accepted the invitation.

The dinner would have contented a Brillat-Savarin—it was faultless; and the claret was that rare nectar, the Lafitte of 1848.

"I never share this," said Welby, "with more than one friend at a time."

Kenelm sought to engage his host in discussion on certain new works in vogue, and which were composed according to purely realistic canons of criticism. "The more realistic these books pretend to be, the less real they are," said Kenelm. "I am half inclined to think that the whole school you so systematically sought to build up is a mistake, and that realism in art is a thing impossible."

"I dare say you are right. I took up that school in earnest because I was in a passion with pretenders to the Idealistic school; and whatever one takes up in earnest is generally a mistake, especially if one is in a passion. I was not in earnest and I was not in a passion when I wrote those articles to which I am indebted for my office." Mr. Welby here luxuriously stretched his limbs, and lifting his glass to his lips, voluptuously inhaled its *bouquet*.

"You sadden me," returned Kenelm. "It is a melancholy thing to find that one's mind was influenced in youth by a teacher who mocks at his own teachings."

Welby shrugged his shoulders. "Life consists in the alternate process of learning and unlearning; but it is often wiser to unlearn than to learn. For the rest, as I have ceased to be a critic, I care little whether I was wrong or right when I played that part. I think I am right now as a placeman. Let the world go its own way, provided the world lets you live upon it. I drain my wine to the lees, and cut down hope to the brief span of life. Reject realism in art if you please, and accept realism in conduct. For the first time in my life I am comfortable: my mind having worn out its walking-shoes, is now enjoying the luxury of slippers. Who can deny the realism of comfort?"

"Has a man a right," Kenelm said to himself, as he entered his brougham, "to employ all the brilliancy of a rare wit—all the acquisitions of as rare a scholarship—to the scaring of the young generation out of the safe old roads which youth left to itself would take—old roads skirted by romantic rivers and bowery trees—directing them into new paths on long sandy flats, and then, when they are faint and footsore, to tell them that he cares not a pin whether they have worn out their shoes in right

paths or wrong paths, for that he has attained the *summum bonum* of philosophy in the comfort of easy slippers?"

Before he could answer the question he thus put to himself, his brougham stopped at the door of the Minister whom Welby had contributed to bring into power.

That night there was a crowded muster of the fashionable world at the great man's house. It happened to be a very critical moment for the Minister. The fate of his cabinet depended on the result of a motion about to be made the following week in the House of Commons. The great man stood at the entrance of the apartments to receive his guests, and among the guests were the framers of the hostile motion and the leaders of the Opposition. His smile was not less gracious to them than to his dearest friends and stanchest supporters.

"I suppose this is realism," said Kenelm to himself; "but it is not truth, and it is not comfort." Leaning against the wall near the doorway, he contemplated with grave interest the striking countenance of his distinguished host. He detected beneath that courteous smile and that urbane manner the signs of care. The eye was absent, the cheek pinched, the brow furrowed. Kenelm turned away his looks, and glanced over the animated countenances of the idle loungers along commoner thoroughfares in life. Their eyes were not absent, their brows were not furrowed; their minds seemed quite at home in exchanging nothings. Interest many of them had in the approaching struggle, but it was much such an interest as betters of small sums may have on the Derby day—just enough to give piquancy to the race; nothing to make gain a great joy, or loss a keen anguish.

"Our host is looking ill," said Mivers, accosting Kenelm. "I detect symptoms of suppressed gout. You know my aphorism, 'nothing so gouty as ambition,' especially Parliamentary ambition."

"You are not one of those friends who press on my choice of life that source of disease; allow me to thank you."

"Your thanks are misplaced. I strongly advise you to devote yourself to a political career."

"Despite the gout?"

"Despite the gout. If you could take the world as I do, my advice might be different. But your mind is overcrowded with doubts and fantasies and crotchets, and you have no choice but to give them vent in active life."

"You had something to do in making me what I am—an idler; something to answer for as to my doubts, fantasies, and crotchets. It was by your recommendation that I was placed under the tuition of Mr. Welby, and at that critical age in which the bent of the twig forms the shape of the tree."

"And I pride myself on that counsel. I repeat the reasons for which I gave it: it is an incalculable advantage for a young man to start in life thoroughly initiated into the New Ideas which will more or less influence his generation. Welby was the ablest representative of these ideas. It is a wondrous good fortune when the propagandist of the New Ideas is something more than a bookish philosopher—when he is a thorough 'man of the world,' and is what we emphatically call 'practical.' Yes, you owe me much that I secured to you such tuition, and saved you from twaddle and sentiment, the poetry of Wordsworth and the muscular Christianity of cousin John."

"What you say that you saved me from might have done me more good than all you conferred on me. I suspect that when education succeeds in placing an old head upon young shoulders, the combination is not healthful—it clogs the blood and slackens the pulse. However, I must not be ungrateful; you meant kindly. Yes, I suppose Welby is practical; he has no belief, and he has got a place. But our host, I presume, is also practical; his place is a much higher one than Welby's, and yet he surely is not without belief?"

"He was born before the new ideas came into practical force; but in proportion as they have done so, his beliefs have necessarily disappeared. I don't suppose that he believes in much now, except the two propositions; firstly, that if he accept the new ideas, he will have power and keep it, and if he does not accept them, power is out of the question; and secondly, that if the new ideas are to prevail, he is the best man to direct them safely,—beliefs quite enough for a Minister. No wise Minister should have more."

"Does he not believe that the motion he is to resist next week is a bad one?"

"A bad one of course, in its consequences, for if it succeed it will upset him; a good one

in itself I am sure he must think it, for he would bring it on himself if he were in opposition."

"I see that Pope's definition is still true, 'Party is the madness of the many for the gain of the few.'"

"No, it is not true. Madness is a wrong word applied to the many; the many are sane enough—they know their own objects, and they make use of the intellect of the few in order to gain their objects. In each party it is the many that control the few who nominally lead them. A man becomes Prime Minister because he seems to the many of his party the fittest person to carry out their views. If he presume to differ from these views, they put him into a moral pillory, and pelt him with their dirtiest stones and their rottenest eggs."

"Then the maxim should be reversed, and party is rather the madness of the few for the gain of the many?"

"Of the two, that is the more correct definition."

"Let me keep my senses and decline to be one of the few."

Kenelm moved away from his cousin's side, and entering one of the less crowded rooms, saw Cecilia Travers seated there in a recess with Lady Glenalvon. He joined them, and after a brief interchange of a few commonplaces, Lady Glenalvon quitted her post to accost a foreign ambassadress, and Kenelm sank into the chair she vacated.

It was a relief to his eye to contemplate Cecilia's candid brow; to his ear to hearken to the soft voice that had no artificial tones, and uttered no cynical witticisms.

"Don't you think it strange," said Kenelm, "that we English should so mould all our habits as to make even what we call pleasure as little pleasurable as possible? We are now in the beginning of June, the fresh outburst of summer, when every day in the country is a delight to eye and ear, and we say, 'the season for hot rooms is beginning.' We alone of civilized races spend our summer in a capital, and cling to the country when the trees are leafless and the brooks frozen."

"Certainly that is a mistake; but I love the country in all seasons, even in winter."

"Provided the country house is full of London people?"

"No; that is rather a drawback. I never want companions in the country."

"True; I should have remembered that you differ from young ladies in general, and make companions of books. They are always more conversible in the country than they are in town; or rather, we listen there to them with less distracted attention. Ha! do I not recognize yonder the fair whiskers of George Belvoir? Who is the lady leaning on his arm?"

"Don't you know?—Lady Emily Belvoir, his wife."

"Ah! I was told that he had married. The lady is handsome. She will become the family diamonds. Does she read blue-books?"

"I will ask her if you wish."

"Nay, it is scarcely worth while. During my rambles abroad, I saw but few English newspapers. I did, however, learn that George had won his election. Has he yet spoken in Parliament?"

"Yes; he moved the answer to the address this session, and was much complimented on the excellent tone and taste of his speech. He spoke again a few weeks afterwards, I fear not so successfully."

"Coughed down?"

"Something like it."

"Do him good; he will recover the cough, and fulfil my prophecy of his success."

"Have you done with poor George for the present? If so, allow me to ask whether you have quite forgotten Will Somers and Jessie Wiles?"

"Forgotten them! no."

"But you have never asked after them?"

"I took it for granted that they were as happy as could be expected. Pray assure me that they are."

"I trust so now; but they have had trouble, and have left Graveleigh."

"Trouble! left Graveleigh! You make me uneasy. Pray explain."

"They had not been three months married and installed in the home they owed to you, when poor Will was seized with a rheumatic fever. He was confined to his bed for many weeks; and when at last he could move from it, was so weak as to be still unable to do any work. During his illness Jessie had no heart and little leisure to attend to the shop. Of course I—that is, my dear father—gave them all necessary assistance; but——"

"I understand; they were reduced to objects of charity. Brute that I am, never to

have thought of the duties I owed to the couple I had brought together. But pray go on."

"You are aware that just before you left us my father received a proposal to exchange his property at Graveleigh for some lands more desirable to him?"

"I remember. He closed with that offer."

"Yes; Captain Stavers, the new landlord of Graveleigh, seems to be a very bad man; and though he could not turn the Somerses out of the cottage so long as they paid rent—which we took care they did pay—yet out of a very wicked spite he set up a rival shop in one of his other cottages in the village, and it became impossible for these poor young people to get a livelihood at Graveleigh."

"What excuse for spite against so harmless a young couple could Captain Stavers find or invent?"

Cecilia looked down and colored. "It was a revengeful feeling against Jessie."

"Ah! I comprehend."

"But they have now left the village, and are happily settled elsewhere. Will has recovered his health, and they are prospering—much more than they could ever have done at Graveleigh."

"In that change you were their benefactress, Miss Travers?" said Kenelm, in a more tender voice and with a softer eye than he had ever before evinced towards the heiress.

"No, it is not I whom they have to thank and bless."

"Who, then, is it? Your father?"

"No. Do not question me; I am bound not to say. They do not themselves know; they rather believe that their gratitude is due to you."

"To me! Am I to be fore ver a sham in spite of myself? My dear Miss Travers, it is essential to my honor that I should undeceive this credulous pair; where can I find them?"

"I must not say; but I will ask permission of their concealed benefactor, and send you their address."

A touch was laid on Kenelm's arm, and a voice whispered—"May I ask you to present me to Miss Travers?"

"Miss Travers," said Kenelm, "I entreat you to add to the list of your acquaintances a cousin of mine—Mr. Chillingly Gordon."

While Gordon addressed to Cecilia the well-bred conventionalisms with which acquaintance in London drawing-rooms usually commence, Kenelm, obedient to a sign from Lady Glenalvon, who had just re-entered the room, quitted his seat, and joined the Marchioness.

"Is not that young man whom you left talking with Miss Travers your clever cousin Gordon?"

"The same."

"She is listening to him with great attention. How his face brightens up as he talks! He is positively handsome, thus animated."

"Yes, I could fancy him a dangerous wooer. He has wit, and liveliness, and audacity; he could be very much in love with a great fortune, and talk to the owner of it with a fervor rarely exhibited by a Chillingly. Well, it is no affair of mine."

"It ought to be."

"Alas and alas! that 'ought to be;' what depths of sorrowful meaning lie within that simple phrase! How happy would be our lives, how grand our actions, how pure our souls, if all could be with us as it ought to be!"

CHAPTER VIII.

We often form cordial intimacies in the confined society of a country house, or a quiet watering-place, or a small Continental town, which fade away into remote acquaintanceship in the mighty vortex of London life, neither party being to blame for the estrangement. It was so with Leopold Travers and Kenelm Chillingly. Travers, as we have seen, had felt a powerful charm in the converse of the young stranger, so in contrast with the routine of the rural companionships to which his alert intellect had for many years circumscribed its range. But, on reappearing in London the season before Kenelm again met him, he had renewed old friendships with men of his own standing,—officers in the regiment of which he had once been a popular ornament, some of them still unmarried, a few of them like himself, widowed; others who had been his rivals in fashion, and were still pleasant idlers about town; and it rarely happens in a metropolis that we have intimate friendships with those of another generation, unless there be some common tie in the cultivation of art and letters, or

the action of kindred sympathies in the party strife of politics. Therefore Travers and Kenelm had had little familiar communication with each other since they first met at the Beaumanoirs'. Now and then they found themselves at the same crowded assemblies, and interchanged nods and salutations. But their habits were different. The houses at which they were intimate were not the same; neither did they frequent the same clubs. Kenelm's chief bodily exercise was still that of long and early rambles into rural suburbs; Leopold's was that of a late ride in the Row. Of the two, Leopold was much more the man of pleasure. Once restored to metropolitan life, a temper constitutionally eager, ardent, and convivial, took kindly, as in earlier youth, to its light range of enjoyments.

Had the intercourse between the two men been as frankly familiar as it had been at Neesdale Park, Kenelm would probably have seen much more of Cecilia at her own home; and the admiration and esteem with which she already inspired him might have ripened into much warmer feeling, had he thus been brought into clearer comprehension of the soft and womanly heart, and its tender predisposition towards himself.

He had said somewhat vaguely in his letter to Sir Peter, that "sometimes he felt as if his indifference to love, as to ambition, was because he had some impossible ideal in each." Taking that conjecture to task, he could not honestly persuade himself that he had formed any ideal of woman and wife with which the reality of Cecilia Travers was at war. On the contrary, the more he thought over the characteristics of Cecilia, the more they seemed to correspond to any ideal that had floated before him in the twilight of dreamy reverie, and yet he knew that he was not in love with her, that his heart did not respond to his reason. And mournfully he resigned himself to the conviction that nowhere in this planet, from the normal pursuits of whose inhabitants he felt so estranged, was there waiting for him the smiling playmate, the earnest helpmate. As this conviction strengthened, so an increased weariness of the artificial life of the metropolis, and of all its objects and amusements, turned his thoughts with an intense yearning towards the Bohemian freedom and fresh excitements of his foot ramblings. He often thought with envy of the wandering minstrel, and wondered whether, if he again traversed the same range of country, he might encounter again that vagrant singer.

CHAPTER IX.

It is nearly a week since Kenelm had met Cecilia, and he is sitting in his rooms with Lord Thetford at that hour of three in the afternoon which is found the most difficult to dispose of by idlers about town. Amongst young men of his own age and class with whom Kenelm assorted in the fashionable world, perhaps the one whom he liked the best, and of whom he saw the most, was this young heir of the Beaumanoirs; and though Lord Thetford has nothing to do with the direct stream of my story, it is worth pausing a few minutes to sketch an outline of one of the best whom the last generation has produced for a part that, owing to accidents of birth and fortune, young men like Lord Thetford must play on that stage from which the curtain is not yet drawn up. Destined to be the head of a family that unites with princely possessions and an historical name a keen though honorable ambition for political power, Lord Thetford has been carefully educated, especially in the new ideas of his time. His father, though a man of no ordinary talents, has never taken a prominent part in public life. He desires his eldest son to do so. The Beaumanoirs have been Whigs from the time of William III. They have shared the good and the ill fortunes of a party which, whether we side with it or not, no politician who dreads extremes in the government of a State so pre-eminently artificial that a prevalent extreme at either end of the balance would be fatal to equilibrium, can desire to become extinct or feeble so long as a constitutional monarchy exists in England. From the reign of George I. to the death of George IV., the Beaumanoirs were in the ascendant. Visit their family portrait gallery, and you must admire the eminence of a house which, during that interval of less than a century, contributed so many men to the service of the State or the adornment of the Court—so many Ministers, Ambassadors, Generals, Lord Chamberlains, and Masters of the Horse. When

the younger Pitt beat the great Whig Houses, the Beaumanoirs vanish into comparative obscurity; they re-emerge with the accession of William IV., and once more produce bulwarks of the State and ornaments of the Crown. The present Lord of Beaumanoir, *poco curante* in politics though he be, has at least held high offices at Court; and, as a matter of course, he is Lord Lieutenant of his county, as well as Knight of the Garter. He is a man whom the chiefs of his party have been accustomed to consult on critical questions. He gives his opinions confidentially and modestly, and when they are rejected never takes offence. He thinks that a time is coming when the head of the Beaumanoirs should descend into the lists and fight hand-to-hand with any Hodge or Hobson in the cause of his country for the benefit of the Whigs. Too lazy or too old to do this himself, he says to his son, "You must do it: without effort of mine the thing may last my life. It needs effort of yours that the thing may last through your own."

Lord Thetford cheerfully responds to the paternal admonition. He curbs his natural inclinations, which are neither inelegant nor unmanly; for, on the one side, he is very fond of music and painting, an accomplished amateur, and deemed a sound connoisseur in both; and, on the other side, he has a passion for all field sports, and especially for hunting. He allows no such attractions to interfere with diligent attention to the business of the House of Commons. He serves in Committees, he takes the chair at public meetings on sanitary questions, or projects for social improvement, and acquits himself well therein. He has not yet spoken in debate, but he has been only two years in Parliament, and he takes his father's wise advice not to speak till the third. But he is not without weight among the well-born youth of the party, and has in him the stuff out of which, when it becomes seasoned, the Corinthian capitals of a Cabinet may be very effectively carved. In his own heart he is convinced that his party are going too far and too fast; but with that party he goes on light-heartedly, and would continue to do so if they went to Erebus. But he would prefer their going the other way. For the rest, a pleasant bright-eyed young fellow, with vivid animal spirits; and, in the holiday moments of reprieve from public duty he brings sunshine into draggling hunting-fields, and a fresh breeze into heated ball-rooms.

"My dear fellow," said Lord Thetford, as he threw aside his cigar, "I quite understand that you bore yourself—you have nothing else to do."

"What can I do?"

"Work."

"Work!"

"Yes, you are clever enough to feel that you have a mind; and mind is a restless inmate of body—it craves occupation of some sort, and regular occupation too; it needs its daily constitutional exercise. Do you give your mind that?"

"I am sure I don't know, but my mind is always busying itself about something or other."

"In a desultory way—with no fixed object."

"True."

"Write a book, and then it will have its constitutional."

"Nay, my mind is always writing a book (though it may not publish one), always jotting down impressions, or inventing incidents, or investigating characters; and between you and me, I do not think that I do bore myself so much as I did formerly. Other people bore me more than they did."

"Because you will not create an object in common with other people: come into Parliament, side with a party, and you have that object."

"Do you mean seriously to tell me that you are not bored in the House of Commons?"

"With the speakers very often, yes; but with the strife between the speakers, no. The House of Commons life has a peculiar excitement scarcely understood out of it; but you may conceive its charm when you observe that a man who has once been in the thick of it, feels forlorn and shelved if he lose his seat, and even repines when the accident of birth transfers him to the serener air of the Upper House. Try that life, Chillingly."

"I might if I were an ultra-Radical, a Republican, a Communist, a Socialist, and wished to upset everything existing, for then the strife would at least be a very earnest one."

"But could not you be equally in earnest against those revolutionary gentlemen?"

"Are you and your leaders in earnest against them? They don't appear to me so."

Thetford was silent for a minute. "Well, if you doubt the principles of my side, go with the other side. For my part, I and many of our party would be glad to see the Conservatives stronger".

"I have no doubt they would. No sensible man likes to be carried off his legs by the rush of the crowd behind him; and a crowd is less headlong when it sees a strong force arrayed against it in front. But it seems to me that, at present, Conservatism can but be what it now is—a party that may combine for resistance, and will not combine for inventive construction. We are living in an age in which the process of unsettlement is going blindly at work, as if impelled by a Nemesis as blind as itself. New ideas come beating in surf and surge against those which former reasoners had considered as fixed banks and breakwaters; and the new ideas are so mutable, so fickle, that those which were considered novel ten years ago are deemed obsolete to-day, and the new ones of to-day will in their turn be obsolete to-morrow. And, in a sort of fatalism, you see statesmen yielding way to these successive mockeries of experiment—for they are experiments against experience—and saying to each other with a shrug of the shoulders, 'Bismillah, it must be so; the country will have it, even though it sends the country to the dogs.' I don't feel sure that the country will not go there the sooner, if you can only strengthen the Conservative element enough to set it up in office, with the certainty of knocking it down again. Alas! I am too dispassionate a looker-on to be fit for a partisan; would I were not. Address yourself to my cousin Gordon."

"Ay, Chillingly Gordon is a coming man, and has all the earnestness you find absent in party and in yourself."

"You call him earnest?"

"Thoroughly, in the pursuit of one object—the advancement of Chillingly Gordon. If he get into the House of Commons, and succeed there, I hope he will never become my leader; for if he thought Christianity in the way of his promotion, he would bring in a bill for its abolition."

"In that case would he still be your leader?"

"My dear Kenelm, you don't know what is the spirit of party, and how easily it makes excuses for any act of its leader. Of course, if Gordon brought in a bill for the abolition of Christianity, it would be on the plea that the abolition was good for the Christians, and his followers would cheer that enlightened sentiment."

"Ah," said Kenelm, with a sigh, "I own myself the dullest of block-heads; for instead of tempting me into the field of party politics, your talk leaves me in stolid amaze that you do not take to your heels, where honor can only be saved by flight."

"Pooh! my dear Chillingly, we can not run away from the age in which we live—we must accept its conditions and make the best of them; and if the House of Commons be nothing else, it is a famous debating society and a capital club. Think over it. I must leave you now. I am going to see a picture at the Exhibition which has been most truculently criticised in 'The Londoner,' but which I am assured, on good authority, is a work of remarkable merit. I can't bear to see a man snarled and sneered down, no doubt by jealous rivals, who have their influence in journals, so I shall judge of the picture for myself. If it be really as good as I am told, I shall talk about it to everybody I meet—and in matters of art I fancy my word goes for something. Study art, my dear Kenelm. No gentleman's education is complete if he don't know a good picture from a bad one. After the Exhibition I shall just have time for a canter round the Park before the debate of the session, which begins to-night."

With a light step the young man quitted the room, humming an air from the 'Figaro' as he descended the stairs. From the window Kenelm watched him swinging himself with careless grace into his saddle and riding briskly down the street—in form and face and bearing, a very model of young, high-born, high-bred manhood. "The Venetians," muttered Kenelm, "decapitated Marino Faliero for conspiring against his own order—the nobles. The Venetians loved their institutions, and had faith them. Is there such love and such faith among the English?"

As he thus soliloquized he heard a shrilling sort of squeak; and a show-man stationed before his window the stage on which Punch satirizes the laws and moralities of the world, "kills the beadle and defies the devil."

CHAPTER X.

KENELM turned from the sight of Punch and Punch's friend the cur, as his servant, entering, said, "A person from the country, who would not give his name, asked to see him."

Thinking it might be some message from his father, Kenelm ordered the stranger to be admitted, and in another minute there entered a young man of handsome countenance and powerful frame, in whom, after a surprised stare, Kenelm recognized Tom Bowles. Difficult indeed would have been that recognition to an unobservant beholder: no trace was left of the sullen bully or the village farrier; the expression of the face was mild and intelligent—more bashful than hardy; the brute strength of the form had lost its former clumsiness, the simple dress was that of a gentleman—to use an expressive idiom, the whole man was wonderfully "toned down."

"I am afraid, sir, I am taking a liberty," said Tom, rather nervously, twiddling his hat between his fingers.

"I should be a greater friend to liberty than I am if it were always taken in the same way," said Kenelm, with a touch of his saturnine humor; but then yielding at once to the warmer impulse of his nature, he grasped his old antagonist's hand and exclaimed, "My dear Tom, you are so welcome. I am so glad to see you. Sit down, man—sit down; make yourself at home."

"I did not know you were back in England, sir, till within the last few days; for you did say that when you came back I should see or hear from you," and there was a tone of reproach in the last words.

"I am to blame, forgive me," said Kenelm, remorsefully. "But how did you find me out? you did not, then, I think, even know my name. That, however, it was easy enough to discover; but who gave you my address in this lodging?"

"Well, sir, it was Miss Travers; and she bade me come to you. Otherwise, as you did not send for me, it was scarcely my place to call uninvited."

"But, my dear Tom, I never dreamed that you were in London. One don't ask a man whom one supposes to be more than a hundred miles off to pay one an afternoon call. You are still with your uncle, I presume? and I need not ask if all thrives well with you—you look a prosperous man, every inch of you, from crown to toe."

"Yes," said Tom; "thank you kindly, sir, I am doing well in the way of business, and my uncle is to give me up the whole concern at Christmas."

While Tom thus spoke Kenelm had summoned his servant, and ordered up such refreshments as could be found in the larder of a bachelor in lodgings. "And what brings you to town, Tom?"

"Miss Travers wrote to me about a little business which she was good enough to manage for me, and said you wished to know about it; and so, after turning it over in my mind for a few days, I resolved to come to town: indeed," added Tom, heartily, "I did wish to see your face again."

"But you talk riddles. What business of yours could Miss Travers imagine I wished to know about?"

Tom colored high, and looked very embarrassed. Luckily the servant here entering with the refreshment-tray, allowed him time to recover himself. Kenelm helped him to a liberal slice of cold pigeon-pie, pressed wine on him, and did not renew the subject till he thought his guest's tongue was likely to be more freely set loose; then he said, laying a friendly hand on Tom's shoulders, "I have been thinking over what passed between me and Miss Travers. I wished to have the new address of Will Somers; she promised to write to his benefactor to ask permission to give it. You are that benefactor?"

"Don't say benefactor, sir. I will tell you how it came about if you will let me. You see, I sold my little place at Graveleigh to the new Squire, and when mother removed to Luscombe to be near me, she told me how poor Jessie had been annoyed by Captain Stavers, who seems to think his purchase included the young women on the property along with the standing timber; and I was half afraid that she had given some cause for his persecution, for you know she has a blink of those soft eyes of hers that might charm a wise man out of his skin, and put a fool there instead."

"But I hope she has done with those blinks since her marriage."

"Well, and I honestly think she has. It is certain she did not encourage Captain Stavers, for I went over to Graveleigh myself on the

sly, and lodged concealed with one of the cottagers who owed me a kindness; and one day, as I was at watch, I saw the Captain peering over the stile which divides Holmwood from the glebe—you remember Holmwood?"

"I can't say I do."

"The footway from the village to Squire Travers's goes through the wood, which is a few hundred yards at the back of Will Somers's orchard. Presently the Captain drew himself suddenly back from the stile, and disappeared among the trees, and then I saw Jessie coming from the orchard with a basket over her arm, and walking quick towards the wood. Then, sir, my heart sank. I felt sure she was going to meet the Captain. However, I crept along the hedgerow, hiding myself, and got into the wood almost as soon as Jessie got there, by another way. Under the cover of the brushwood I stole on till I saw the Captain come out from the copse on the other side of the path, and plant himself just before Jessie. Then I saw at once I had wronged her. She had not expected to see him, for she hastily turned back, and began to run homeward; but he caught her up, and seized her by the arm. I could not hear what he said, but I heard her voice quite sharp with fright and anger. And then he suddenly seized her round the waist, and she screamed, and I sprang forward——"

"And thrashed the Captain?"

"No, I did not," said Tom; "I had made a vow to myself that I never would be violent again if I could help it. So I took him with one hand by the cuff of the neck, and with the other by the waist-band, and just pitched him on a bramble-bush—quite mildly. He soon picked himself up, for he is a dapper little chap, and became very blustering and abusive. But I kept my temper, and said civilly, 'Little gentleman, hard words break no bones; but if ever you molest Mrs. Somers again, I will carry you into her orchard, souse you into the duck-pond there, and call all the villagers to see you scramble out of it again; and I will do it now if you are not off. I daresay you have heard of my name—I am Tom Bowles.' Upon that his face, which was before very red, grew very white, and muttering something I did not hear, he walked away.

"Jessie—I mean Mrs. Somers—seemed at first as much frightened at me as she had been at the Captain; and though I offered to walk with her to Miss Travers's, where she was going with a basket which the young lady had ordered, she refused, and went back home. I felt hurt, and returned to my uncle's the same evening; and it was not for months that I heard the Captain had been spiteful enough to set up an opposition shop, and that poor Will had been taken ill, and his wife was confined about the same time, and the talk was that they were in distress, and might have to be sold up.

"When I heard all this, I thought that after all it was my rough tongue that had so angered the Captain and been the cause of his spite, and so it was my duty to make it up to poor Will and his wife. I did not know how to set about mending matters, but I thought I'd go and talk to Miss Travers; and if ever there was a kind heart in a girl's breast, hers is one."

"You are right there, I guess What did Miss Travers say?"

"Nay; I hardly know what she did say, but she set me thinking, and it struck me that Jessie—Mrs. Somers—had better move to a distance, and out of the Captain's reach, and that Will would do better in a less out-of-the-way place. And then, by good luck, I read in the newspaper that a stationery and fancy-work business, with a circulating library, was to be sold on moderate terms at Moleswich, the other side of London. So I took the train and went to the place, and thought the shop would just suit these young folks, and not be too much work for either; then I went to Miss Travers, and I had a lot of money lying by me from the sale of the old forge and premises, which I did not know what to do with; and so, to cut short a long story, I bought the business, and Will and his wife are settled at Moleswich, thriving and happy, I hope, sir."

Tom's voice quivered at the last words, and he turned aside quickly, passing his hand over his eyes.

Kenelm was greatly moved.

"And they don't know what you did for them?"

"To be sure not. I don't think Will would have let himself be beholden to me. Ah! the lad has a spirit of his own, and Jessie—Mrs. Somers—would have felt pained and humbled that I should even think of such a thing. Miss Travers managed it all. They take the money as a loan which is to be paid by instalments. They have sent Miss Travers more than one

instalment already, so I know they are doing well."

"A loan from Miss Travers?"

"No; Miss Travers wanted to have a share in it, but I begged her not. It made me happy to do what I did all myself; and Miss Travers felt for me and did not press. They perhaps think it is Squire Travers (though he is not a man who would like to say it, for fear it should bring applicants on him), or some other gentleman who takes an interest in them."

"I always said you were a grand fellow, Tom. But you are grander still than I thought you."

"If there be any good in me, I owe it to you, sir. Think what a drunken, violent brute I was when I first met you. Those walks with you, and I may say that other gentleman's talk, and then that long kind letter I had from you, not signed in your name, and written from abroad—all these changed me, as the child is changed at nurse."

"You have evidently read a good deal since we parted."

"Yes; I belong to our young men's library and institute; and when of an evening I get hold of a book, especially a pleasant story book, I don't care for other company."

"Have you never seen any other girl you could care for, and wish to marry?"

"Ah, sir," answered Tom, "a man does not go so mad for a girl as I did for Jessie Wiles, and when it is all over, and he has come to his senses, put his heart into joint again as easily as if it were only a broken leg. I don't say that I may not live to love and to marry another woman—it is my wish to do so. But I know that I shall love Jessie to my dying day; but not sinfully, sir—not sinfully. I would not wrong her by a thought."

There was a long pause.

At last Kenelm said—"You promised to be kind to that little girl with the flower-ball; what has become of her?"

"She is quite well, thank you, sir. My aunt has taken a great fancy to her, and so has my mother. She comes to them very often of an evening, and brings her work with her. A quick, intelligent little thing, and full of pretty thoughts. On Sundays, if the weather is fine, we stroll out together in the fields."

"She has been a comfort to you, Tom."

"Oh yes."

"And loves you?"

"I am sure she does; an affectionate, grateful child."

"She will be a woman soon, Tom, and may love you as a woman then."

Tom looked indignant and rather scornful at that suggestion, and hastened to revert to the subject more immediately at his heart.

"Miss Travers said you would like to call on Will Somers and his wife; will you? Moleswich is not far from London, you know."

"Certainly, I will call."

"I do hope you will find them happy; and if so, perhaps you will kindly let me know; and—and—I wonder whether Jessie's child is like her? It is a boy—somehow or other I would rather it had been a girl."

"I will write you full particulars. But why not come with me?"

"No, I don't think I could do that, just at present. It unsettled me sadly when I did again see her sweet face at Graveleigh, and she was still afraid of me too!—that was a sharp pang."

"She ought to know what you have done for her, and will."

"On no account, sir; promise me that. I should feel mean if I humbled them—that way."

"I understand, though I will not as yet make you any positive promise. Meanwhile, if you are staying in town, lodge with me; my landlady can find you a room."

"Thank you heartily, sir; but I go back by the evening train; and, bless me! how late it is now! I must wish you good-bye. I have some commissions to do for my aunt, and I must buy a new doll for Susey."

"Susey is the name of the little girl with the flower-ball?"

"Yes. I must run off now; I feel quite light at heart seeing you again and finding that you receive me still so kindly, as if we were equals."

"Ah, Tom, I wish I was your equal—nay, half as noble as Heaven has made you!"

Tom laughed incredulously, and went his way.

"This mischievous passion of love," said Kenelm to himself, "has its good side, it seems, after all. If it was nearly making a wild beast of that brave fellow—nay, worse than wild beast, a homicide doomed to the gibbet—so,

on the other hand, what a refined, delicate, chivalrous nature of gentleman it has developed out of the stormy elements of its first madness. Yes, I will go and look at this new-married couple. I dare say they are already snarling and spitting at each other like cat and dog. Moleswich is within reach of a walk."

BOOK FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

Two days after the interview recorded in the last chapter of the previous Book, Travers, chancing to call at Kenelm's lodgings, was told by his servant that Mr. Chillingly had left London, alone, and had given no orders as to forwarding letters. The servant did not know where he had gone, or when he would return.

Travers repeated this news incidentally to Cecilia, and she felt somewhat hurt that he had not written her a line respecting Tom's visit. She, however, guessed that he had gone to see the Somerses, and would return to town in a day or so. But weeks passed, the season drew to its close, and of Kenelm Chillingly she saw or heard nothing: he had wholly vanished from the London world. He had but written a line to his servant, ordering him to repair to Exmundham and await him there, and enclosing him a check to pay outstanding bills.

We must now follow the devious steps of the strange being who has grown into the hero of this story. He had left his apartment at daybreak long before his servant was up, with his knapsack, and a small portmanteau, into which he had thrust—besides such additional articles of dress as he thought he might possibly require, and which his knapsack could not contain—a few of his favorite books. Driving with these in a hack-cab to the Vauxhall station, he directed the portmanteau to be forwarded to Moleswich, and flinging the knapsack on his shoulders, walked slowly along the drowsy suburbs that stretched far into the landscape, before, breathing more freely, he found some evidences of rural culture on either side of the high road. It was not, however, till he had left the roofs and trees of pleasant Richmond far behind him that he began to feel he was out of reach of the metropolitan disquieting influences. Finding at a little inn, where he stopped to breakfast, that there was a path along fields, and in sight of the river, through which he could gain the place of his destination, he then quitted the high road, and traversing one of the loveliest districts in one of our loveliest counties, he reached Moleswich about noon.

CHAPTER II.

On entering the main street of the pretty town, the name of Somers, in gilt capitals, was sufficiently conspicuous over the door of a very imposing shop. It boasted two plate-glass windows, at one of which were tastefully exhibited various articles of fine stationery, embroidery patterns, etc.; at the other, no less tastefully, sundry specimens of ornamental basket-work.

Kenelm crossed the threshold and recognized behind the counter—fair as ever, but with an expression of face more staid, and a figure more rounded and matron-like—his old friend Jessie. There were two or three customers before her, between whom she was dividing her attention. While a handsome young lady, seated, was saying, in a somewhat loud, but cheery and pleasant voice, "Do not mind me, Mrs. Somers—I can wait," Jessie's quick eye darted towards the stranger, but too rapidly to distinguish his features, which, indeed, he turned away, and began to examine the baskets.

In a minute or so the other customers were served and had departed. And the voice of the lady was again heard—"Now, Mrs. Somers, I want to see your picture-books and toys. I am giving a little children's party this afternoon, and I want to make them as happy as possible."

"Somewhere or other on this planet, or before my Monad was whisked away to it, I have heard that voice," muttered Kenelm. While Jessie was alertly bringing forth her toys and picture-books, she said, "I am sorry to keep you waiting, sir; but if it is the baskets you come about, I can call my husband."

"Do," said Kenelm.

"William—William," cried Mrs. Somers; and after a delay long enough to allow him to slip on his jacket, William Somers emerged from the back parlor.

His face had lost its old trace of suffering and ill health; it was still somewhat pale, and retained its expression of intellectual refinement.

"How you have improved in your art!" said Kenelm, heartily.

William started, and recognized Kenelm at once. He sprang forward and took Kenelm's outstretched hand in both his own, and, in a voice between laughing and crying, exclaimed —"Jessie, Jessie, it is he!—he whom we pray for every night. God bless you!—God bless and make you as happy as He permitted you to make me!"

Before this little speech was faltered out, Jessie was by her husband's side, and she added, in a lower voice, but tremulous with deep feeling—"And me too!"

"By your leave, Will," said Kenelm, and he saluted Jessie's white forehead with a kiss that could not have been kindlier or colder if it had been her grandfather's.

Meanwhile the lady had risen noiselessly and unobserved, and stealing up to Kenelm, looked him full in the face.

"You have another friend here, sir, who has also some cause to thank you——"

"I thought I remembered your voice," said Kenelm, looking puzzled. "But pardon me if I cannot recall your features. Where have we met before?"

"Give me your arm when we go out, and I will bring myself to your recollection. But no: I must not hurry you away now. I will call again in half an hour. Mrs. Somers, meanwhile put up the things I have selected. I will take them away with me when I come back from the vicarage, where I have left the pony-carriage." So, with a parting nod and smile to Kenelm, she turned away, and left him bewildered.

"But who is that lady, Will?"

"A Mrs. Braefield. She is a new-comer."

"She may well be that, Will," said Jessie, smiling, "for she has only been married six months."

"And what was her name before she married?"

"I am sure I don't know, sir. It is only three months since we came here, and she has been very kind to us, and an excellent customer. Everybody likes her. Mr. Braefield is a city gentleman, and very rich; and they live in the finest house in the place, and see a great deal of company."

"Well, I am no wiser than I was before," said Kenelm. "People who ask questions very seldom are."

"And how did you find us out, sir?" said Jessie. "Oh! I guess," she added, with an arch glance and smile. "Of course, you have seen Miss Travers, and she told you."

"You are right. I first learned your change of residence from her, and thought I would come and see you, and be introduced to the baby—a boy, I understand? Like you, Will?"

"No, sir—the picture of Jessie."

"Nonsense, Will; it is you all over, even to its little hands."

"And your good mother, Will, how did you leave her?"

"Oh, sir!" cried Jessie, reproachfully; "do you think we could have the heart to leave mother—so lone and rheumatic too? She is tending baby, now—always does while I am in the shop."

Here Kenelm followed the young couple into the parlor, where, seated by the window, they found old Mrs. Somers reading the Bible and rocking the baby, who slept peacefully in its cradle.

"Will," said Kenelm, bending his dark face over the infant, "I will tell you a pretty thought of a foreign poet's, which has been thus badly translated:—

"'Blest babe, a boundless world this bed so narrow seems to thee;
Grow man, and narrower than this bed the boundless world shall be.'"*

* Schiller.

"I don't think that is true, sir," said Will, simply; "for a happy home is a world wide enough for any man."

Tears started into Jessie's eyes; she bent down and kissed—not the baby—but the cradle. "Will made it." She added, blushing, "I mean the cradle, sir."

Time flew past while Kenelm talked with Will and the old mother, for Jessie was soon summoned back to the shop; and Kenelm was startled when he found the half-hour's grace allowed to him was over, and Jessie put her head in at the door and said, "Mrs. Braefield is waiting for you."

"Good-bye, Will; I shall come and see you again soon; and my mother gives me a commission to buy I don't know how many specimens of your craft."

CHAPTER III.

A SMART pony-phaeton, with a box for a driver in livery equally smart, stood at the shop-door.

"Now, Mr. Chillingly," said Mrs. Braefield, "it is my turn to run away with you; get in!"

"Eh!" murmured Kenelm, gazing at her with large dreamy eyes. "Is it possible?"

"Quite possible; get in. Coachman, home! Yes, Mr. Chillingly, you meet again that giddy creature whom you threatened to thrash; it would have served her right. I ought to feel so ashamed to recall myself to your recollection, and yet I am not a bit ashamed. I am proud to show you that I have turned out a steady, respectable woman, and, my husband tells me, a good wife."

"You have only been six months married, I hear," said Kenelm, drily. "I hope your husband will say the same six years hence."

"He will say the same sixty years hence, if we live as long."

"How old is he now?"

"Thirty-eight."

"When a man wants only two years of his hundredth, he probably has learned to know his own mind; but then, in most cases, very little mind is left to him to know."

"Don't be satirical, sir; and don't talk as if you were railing at marriage, when you have just left as happy a young couple as the sun ever shone upon; and owing—for Mrs. Somers has told me all about her marriage—owing their happiness to you."

"Their happiness to me! not in the least. I helped them to marry, and in spite of marriage, they helped each other to be happy."

"You are still unmarried yourself?"

"Yes, thank Heaven!"

"And are you happy?"

"No; I can't make myself happy—myself is a discontented brute."

"Then why do you say 'thank Heaven'?"

"Because it is a comfort to think I am not making somebody else unhappy."

"Do you believe that if you loved a wife who loved you, you should make her unhappy?"

"I am sure I don't know; but I have not seen a woman whom I could love as a wife. And we need not push our inquiries further. What has become of that ill-treated gray cob?"

"He was quite well, thank you, when I last heard of him."

"And the uncle who would have inflicted me upon you, if you had not so gallantly defended yourself?"

"He is living where he did live, and has married his housekeeper. He felt a delicate scruple against taking that step till I was married myself, and out of the way."

Here Mrs. Braefield, beginning to speak very hurriedly, as women who seek to disguise emotion often do, informed Kenelm how unhappy she had felt for weeks after, having found an asylum with her aunt—how she had been stung by remorse and oppressed by a sense of humiliation at the thought of her folly and the odious recollection of Mr. Compton—how she had declared to herself that she would never marry any one now—never! How Mr. Braefield happened to be on a visit in the neighborhood, and saw her at church—how he had sought an introduction to her—and how at first she rather disliked him than not; but he was so good and so kind, and when at last he proposed—and she had frankly told him all about her girlish flight and infatuation—how generously he had thanked her for a candor which had placed her as high in his esteem as she had been before in his love. "And from that moment," said Mrs. Braefield, passionately, "my whole heart leapt to

him. And now you know all. And here we are at the Lodge."

The pony-phaeton went with great speed up a broad gravel-drive, bordered with rare evergreens, and stopped at a handsome house with a portico in front, and a long conservatory at the garden side—one of those houses which belong to "city gentlemen," and often contain more comfort and exhibit more luxury than many a stately manorial mansion.

Mrs. Braefield evidently felt some pride as she led Kenelm through the handsome hall, paved with Malvern tiles and adorned with Scagliola columns, and into a drawing-room furnished with much taste, and opening on a spacious flower-garden.

"But where is Mr. Braefield?" asked Kenelm.

"Oh, he has taken the rail to his office; but he will be back long before dinner, and of course you dine with us."

"You are very hospitable, but——"

"No buts: I will take no excuse. Don't fear that you shall have only mutton-chops and a rice-pudding; and besides, I have a children's party coming at two o'clock, and there will be all sorts of fun. You are fond of children, I am sure?"

"I rather think I am not. But I have never clearly ascertained my own inclinations upon that subject."

"Well, you shall have ample opportunity to do so to-day. And oh! I promise you the sight of the loveliest face that you can picture to yourself when you think of your future wife."

"My future wife, I hope, is not yet born," said Kenelm, wearily, and with much effort suppressing a yawn. "But, at all events, I will stay till after two o'clock; for two o'clock, I presume, means luncheon."

Mrs. Braefield laughed.—"You retain your appetite?"

"Most single men do, provided they don't fall in love and become doubled up."

At this abominable attempt at a pun, Mrs. Braefield disdained to laugh; but turning away from its perpetrator she took off her hat and gloves and passed her hands lightly over her forehead, as if to smooth back some vagrant tress in locks already sufficiently sheen and trim. She was not quite so pretty in female attire as she had appeared in boy's dress, nor did she look quite as young. In all other respects she was wonderfully improved. There was a serener, a more settled intelligence in her frank bright eyes, a milder expression in the play of her parted lips. Kenelm gazed at her with pleased admiration. And as now, turning from the glass, she encountered his look, a deeper color came into the clear delicacy of her cheeks, and the frank eyes moistened. She came up to him as he sate, and took his hand in both hers, pressing it warmly, "Ah, Mr. Chillingly," she said, with impulsive tremulous tones, "look round, look round this happy peaceful home!—the life so free from a care, the husband whom I so love and honor; all the blessings that I might have so recklessly lost for ever had I not met with you, had I been punished as I deserved. How often I thought of your words, that 'you would be proud of my friendship when we met again!' What strength they gave me in my hours of humbled self-reproach!" Her voice here died away as if in the effort to suppress a sob.

She released his hand, and before he could answer, passed quickly through the open sash into the garden.

CHAPTER IV.

The children have come,—some thirty of them, pretty as English children generally are, happy in the joy of the summer sunshine, and the flower lawns, and the feast under cover of an awning suspended between chestnut-trees, and carpeted with sward.

No doubt Kenelm held his own at the banquet, and did his best to increase the general gaiety, for whenever he spoke the children listened eagerly, and when he had done they laughed mirthfully.

"The fair face I promised you," whispered Mrs. Braefield, "is not here yet. I have a little note from the young lady to say that Mrs. Cameron does not feel very well this morning, but hopes to recover sufficiently to come later in the afternoon."

"And pray who is Mrs. Cameron?"

"Ah! I forgot that you are a stranger to the place. Mrs. Cameron is the aunt with whom Lily resides. Is it not a pretty name, Lily?"

"Very! emblematic of a spinster that does not spin, with a white head and a thin stalk."

"Then the name belies my Lily, as you will see."

The children now finished their feast, and betook themselves to dancing in an alley smoothed for a croquet-ground, and to the sound of a violin played by the old grandfather of one of the party. While Mrs. Braefield was busying herself with forming the dance, Kenelm seized the occasion to escape from a young nymph of the age of twelve who had sat next him at the banquet, and taken so great a fancy to him that he began to fear she would vow never to forsake his side, and stole away undetected.

There are times when the mirth of others only saddens us, especially the mirth of children with high spirits, that jar on our own quiet mood. Gliding through a dense shrubbery, in which, though the lilacs were faded, the laburnum still retained here and there the waning gold of its clusters, Kenelm came into a recess which bounded his steps and invited him to repose. It was a circle, so formed artifically by slight trellises, to which clung parasite roses heavy with leaves and flowers. In the midst played a tiny fountain with a silvery murmuring sound; at the background, dominating the place, rose the crests of stately trees, on which the sunlight shimmered, but which rampired out all horizon beyond. Even as in life do the great dominant passions—love, ambition, desire of power, or gold, or fame, or knowledge—form the proud background to the brief-lived flowerets of our youth, lift our eyes beyond the smile of their bloom, catch the glint of a loftier sunbeam, and yet, and yet, exclude our sight from the lengths and the widths of the space which extends behind and beyond them.

Kenelm threw himself on the turf beside the fountain. From afar came the whoop and the laugh of the children in their sports or their dance. At the distance their joy did not sadden him—he marvelled why; and thus, in musing reverie, thought to explain the why to himself.

"The poet," so ran his lazy thinking, "has told us that 'distance lends enchantment to the view,' and thus compares to the charm of distance the illusion of hope. But the poet narrows the scope of his own illustration. Distance lends enchantment to the ear as well as to the sight; nor to these bodily senses alone. Memory no less than hope owes its charm to 'the far away.'

"I cannot imagine myself again a child when I am in the midst of yon noisy children. But as their noise reaches me here, subdued and mellowed, and knowing, thank Heaven! that the urchins are not within reach of me, I could readily dream myself back into childhood, and into sympathy with the lost playfields of school.

"So surely it must be with grief: how different the terrible agony for a beloved one just gone from earth, to the soft regret for one who disappeared into heaven years ago! So with the art of poetry: how imperatively, when it deals with the great emotions of tragedy, it must remove the actors from us, in proportion as the emotions are to elevate, and the tragedy is to please us by the tears it draws! Imagine our shock if a poet were to place on the stage some wise gentleman with whom we dined yesterday, and who was discovered to have killed his father and married his mother. But when Œdipus commits those unhappy mistakes nobody is shocked. Oxford in the nineteenth century is a long way off from Thebes 3000 or 4000 years ago.

"And," continued Kenelm, plunging deeper into the maze of metaphysical criticism, "even where the poet deals with persons and things close upon our daily sight—if he would give them poetic charm he must resort to a sort of moral or psychological distance; the nearer they are to us in external circumstance, the farther they must be in some internal peculiarities. Werter and Clarissa Harlowe are described as contemporaries of their artistic creation, and with the minutest details of an apparent realism; yet they are at once removed from our daily lives by their idiosyncrasies and their fates. We know that while Werter and Clarissa are so near to us in much that we sympathize with them as friends and kinsfolk, they are yet as much remote from us in the poetic and idealized side of their natures as if they belonged to the age of Homer; and this it is that invests with charm the very pain which their fate inflicts on us. Thus, I suppose, it must be in love. If the love we feel is to have the glamour of poetry, it must be love for some one morally at a distance from our

ordinary habitual selves; in short, differing from us in attributes which, however near we draw to the possessor, we can never approach, never blend, in attributes of our own; so that there is something in the loved one that always remains an ideal—a mystery—'a sun-bright summit mingling with the sky!'"

Herewith the soliloquist's musings slided vaguely into mere reverie. He closed his eyes drowsily, not asleep, nor yet quite awake: as sometimes in bright summer days when we recline on the grass we do close our eyes, and yet dimly recognize a golden light bathing the drowsy lids; and athwart that light images come and go like dreams, though we know that we are not dreaming.

CHAPTER V.

From this state, half comatose, half unconscious, Kenelm was roused slowly, reluctantly. Something struck softly on his cheek—again a little less softly; he opened his eyes—they fell first upon two tiny rosebuds, which, on striking his face, had fallen on his breast; and then looking up, he saw before him, in an opening of the trellised circle, a female child's laughing face. Her hand was still uplifted charged with another rosebud, but behind the child's figure, looking over her shoulder and holding back the menacing arm, was a face as innocent but lovelier far—the face of a girl in her first youth, framed round with the blossoms that festooned the trellise. How the face became the flowers! It seemed the fairy spirit of them.

Kenelm started and rose to his feet. The child, the one whom he had so ungallantly escaped from, ran towards him through a wicket in the circle. Her companion disappeared.

"Is it you?" said Kenelm to the child—"you who pelted me so cruelly? Ungrateful creature! Did I not give you the best strawberries in the dish and all my own cream?"

"But why did you run away and hide yourself when you ought to be dancing with me?" replied the young lady, evading, with the instinct of her sex, all answer to the reproach she had deserved.

"I did not run away, and it is clear that I did not mean to hide myself since you so easily found me out. But who was the young lady with you? I suspect she pelted me too, for *she* seems to have run away to hide herself."

"No, she did not pelt you; she wanted to stop me, and you would have had another rosebud—oh, so much bigger!—if she had not held back my arm. Don't you know her—don't you know Lily?"

"No; so that is Lily? You shall introduce me to her."

By this time they had passed out of the circle through the little wicket opposite the path by which Kenelm had entered, and opening at once on the lawn. Here at some distance the children were grouped, some reclined on the grass, some walking to and fro, in the interval of the dance.

In the space between the group and the trellise, Lily was walking alone and quickly. The child left Kenelm's side and ran after her friend, soon overtook, but did not succeed in arresting her steps. Lily did not pause till she had reached the grassy ball-room, and here all the children came round her and shut out her delicate form from Kenelm's sight.

Before he had reached the place, Mrs. Braefield met him.

"Lily is come!"

"I know it—I have seen her."

"Is not she beautiful?"

"I must see more of her if I am to answer critically; but before you introduce me, may I be permitted to ask who and what is Lily?"

Mrs. Braefield paused a moment before she answered, and yet the answer was brief enough not to need much consideration. "She is a Miss Mordaunt, an orphan; and, as I before told you, resides with her aunt, Mrs. Cameron, a widow. They have the prettiest cottage you ever saw on the banks of the river, or rather rivulet, about a mile from this place. Mrs. Cameron is a very good, simple-hearted woman. As to Lily, I can praise her beauty only with safe conscience, for as yet she is a mere child—her mind quite unformed."

"Did you ever meet any man, much less any woman, whose mind was formed?" muttered Kenelm. "I am sure mine is not, and never will be on this earth."

Mrs. Braefield did not hear this low-voiced observation. She was looking about for Lily; and perceiving her at last as the children who

surrounded her were dispersing to renew the dance, she took Kenelm's arm, led him to the young lady, and a formal introduction took place.

Formal as it could be on those sunlit swards, amidst the joy of summer and the laugh of children. In such scene and such circumstance, formality does not last long. I know not how it was, but in a very few minutes Kenelm and Lily had ceased to be strangers to each other. They found themselves seated apart from the rest of the merry-makers, on the bank shadowed by lime-trees; the man listening with downcast eyes, the girl with mobile shifting glances now on earth now on heaven, and talking freely, gaily—like the babble of a happy stream, with a silvery dulcet voice, and a sparkle of rippling smiles.

No doubt this is a reversal of the formalities of well-bred life, and conventional narrating thereof. According to them, no doubt it is for the man to talk and the maid to listen; but I state the facts as they were, honestly. And Lily knew no more of the formalities of drawing-room life than a skylark fresh from its nest knows of the song-teacher and the cage. She was still so much of a child. Mrs. Braefield was right—her mind was still so unformed.

What she did talk about in that first talk between them that could make the meditative Kenelm listen so mutely, so intently, I know not, at least I could not jot it down on paper. I fear it was very egotistical, as the talk of children generally is—about herself and her aunt, and her home and her friends—all her friends seemed children like herself, though younger—Clemmy the chief of them. Clemmy was the one who had taken a fancy to Kenelm. And amidst all this ingenuous prattle there came flashes of a quick intellect, a lively fancy—nay, even a poetry of expression or of sentiment. It might be the talk of a child, but certainly not of a silly child.

But as soon as the dance was over, the little ones again gathered round Lily. Evidently she was the prime favorite of them all; and as her companion had now become tired of dancing, new sports were proposed, and Lily was carried off to "Prisoner's Base."

"I am very happy to make your acquaintance, Mr. Chillingly," said a frank, pleasant voice; and a well-dressed, good-looking man held out his hand to Kenelm.

"My husband," said Mrs. Braefield, with a certain pride in her look.

Kenelm responded cordially to the civilities of the master of the house, who had just returned from his city office, and left all its cares behind him. You had only to look at him to see that he was prosperous, and deserved to be so. There were in his countenance the signs of strong sense, of good-humor—above all, of an active energetic temperament. A man of broad smooth forehead, keen hazel eyes, firm lips and jaw; with a happy contentment in himself, his house, the world in general, mantling over his genial smile, and out-spoken in the metalic ring of his voice.

"You will stay and dine with us, of course," said Mrs. Braefield; "and unless you want very much to be in town to-night, I hope you will take a bed here."

Kenelm hesitated.

"Do stay at least till to-morrow," said Mrs. Braefield. Kenelm hesitated still; and while hesitating his eye rested on Lily, leaning on the arm of a middle-aged lady and approaching the hostess—evidently to take leave.

"I cannot resist so tempting an invitation," said Kenelm, and he fell back a little behind Lily and her companion.

"Thank you much for so pleasant a day, said Mrs. Cameron to the hostess. Lily has enjoyed herself extremely. I only regret we could not come earlier."

"If you are walking home," said Mr. Braefield, "let me accompany you. I want to speak to your gardener about his heart's-ease—it is much finer than mine."

"If so," said Kenelm to Lily, "may I come too? Of all flowers that grow, heart's-ease is the one I most prize."

A few minutes afterwards Kenelm was walking by the side of Lily along the banks of a little stream, tributary to the Thames—Mrs. Cameron and Mr. Braefield in advance, for the path only held two abreast.

Suddenly Lily left his side, allured by a rare butterfly—I think it is called the Emperor of Morocco—that was sunning its yellow wings upon a group of wild reeds. She succeeded in capturing this wanderer in her straw hat, over which she drew her sun-veil. After this notable capture she returned demurely to Kenelm's side.

"Do you collect insects?" said that philoso-

pher, as much surprised as it was his nature to be at anything.

"Only butterflies," answered Lily; "they are not insects, you know; they are souls."

"Emblems of souls you mean—at least, so the Greeks prettily represented them to be."

"No, real souls—the souls of infants that die in their cradles unbaptized; and if they are taken care of, and not eaten by birds, and live a year, then they pass into fairies."

"It is a very poetical idea, Miss Mordaunt, and founded on evidence quite as rational as other assertions of the metamorphosis of one creature into another. Perhaps you can do what the philosophers cannot—tell me how you learned a new idea to be an incontestible fact?"

"I don't know," replied Lily, looking very much puzzled; "perhaps I learned it in a book, or perhaps I dreamed it."

"You could not make a wiser answer if you were a philosopher. But you talk of taking care of butterflies; how do you do that? Do you impale them on pins stuck into a glass case?"

"Impale them! How can you talk so cruelly? You deserve to be pinched by the fairies."

"I am afraid," thought Kenelm compassionately, "that my companion has no mind to be formed; what is euphoniously called 'an innocent.'"

He shook his head and remained silent.

Lily resumed—

"I will show you my collection when we get home—they seem so happy. I am sure there are some of them who know me—they will feed from my hand. I have only had one die since I began to collect them last summer."

"Then you have kept them a year; they ought to have turned into fairies."

"I suppose many of them have. Of course I let out all those that had been with me twelve months—they don't turn to fairies in the cage, you know. Now I have only those I caught this year, or last autumn; the prettiest don't appear till the autumn."

The girl here bent her uncovered head over the straw hat, her tresses shadowing it, and uttered loving words to the prisoner. Then again she looked up and around her, and abruptly stopped, and exclaimed—

"How can people live in towns—how can people say they are ever dull in the country? Look," she continued, gravely and earnestly—look at that tall pine-tree, with its long branch sweeping over the water; see how, as the breeze catches it, it changes its shadow, and how the shadow changes the play of the sunlight on the brook:—

> 'Wave your tops, ye pines;
> With every plant, in sign of worship wave.'

What an interchange of music there must be between Nature and a poet!"

Kenelm was startled. This "an innocent"!—this a girl who had no mind to be formed! In that presence he could not be cynical; could not speak of Nature as a mechanism, a lying humbug; as he had done to the man poet. He replied gravely—

"The Creator has gifted the whole universe with language, but few are the hearts that can interpret it. Happy those to whom it is no foreign tongue, acquired imperfectly with care and pain, but rather a native language, learned unconsciously from the lips of the great mother. To them the butterfly's wing may well buoy into heaven a fairy's soul!"

When he had thus said Lily turned, and for the first time attentively looked into his dark soft eyes; then instinctively she laid her light hand on his arm, and said in a low voice, "Talk on—talk thus; I like to hear you."

But Kenelm did not talk on. They had now arrived at the garden-gate of Mrs. Cameron's cottage, and the elder persons in advance paused at the gate and walked with them to the house.

It was a long, low, irregular cottage, without pretension to architectural beauty, yet exceedingly picturesque—a flower-garden, large, but in proportion to the house, with parterres in which the colors were exquisitely assorted, sloping to the grassy margin of the rivulet, where the stream expanded into a lake-like basin, narrowed at either end by locks, from which with gentle sound flowed shallow waterfalls. By the banks was a rustic seat, half overshadowed by the drooping boughs of a vast willow.

The inside of the house was in harmony with the exterior—cottage-like, but with an unmistakable air of refinement about the rooms, even in the little entrance-hall, which was painted in Pompeian frescoes.

"Come and see my butterfly cage," said Lily, whisperingly.

Kenelm followed her through the window that opened on the garden; and at one end of a small conservatory, or rather, green-house, was the habitation of these singular favorites. It was as large as a small room; three sides of it formed by minute wirework, with occasional draperies of muslin or other slight material, and covered at intervals, sometimes within, sometimes without, by dainty creepers; a tiny cistern in the centre, from which up-sprang a sparkling jet. Lily cautiously lifted a sash-door and glided in, closing it behind her. Her entrance set in movement a multitude of gossamer wings, some fluttering round her, some more boldly settling on her hair or dress. Kenelm thought she had not vainly boasted when she said that some of the creatures had learned to know her. She relieved the Emperor of Morocco from her hat; it circled round her fearlessly, and then vanished amidst the leaves of the creepers. Lily opened the door and came out.

"I have heard of a philosopher who tamed a wasp," said Kenelm, "but never before of a young lady who tamed butterflies."

"No," said Lily, proudly; "I believe I am the first who attempted it. I don't think I should have attempted it if I had been told that others had succeeded before me. Not that I have succeeded quite. No matter; if they don't love me, I love them."

They re-entered the drawing-room, and Mrs. Cameron addressed Kenelm.

"Do you know much of this part of the country, Mr. Chillingly?"

"It is quite new to me, and more rural than many districts further from London."

"That is the good fortune of most of our home counties," said Mr. Braefield; "they escape the smoke and din of manufacturing towns, and agricultural science has not demolished their leafy hedgerows. The walks through our green lanes are as much bordered with convolvulus and honeysuckle as they were when Izaak Walton sauntered through them to angle in that stream?"

"Does tradition say that he angled in that stream? I thought his haunts were rather on the other side of London."

"Possibly; I am not learned in Walton or in his art, but there is an old summer-house, on the other side of the lock yonder, on which is carved the name of Izaak Walton, but whether by his own hand or another's who shall say? Has Mr. Melville been here lately, Mrs. Cameron?"

"No, not for several months."

"He has had a glorious success this year. We may hope that at last his genius is acknowledged by the world. I meant to buy his picture, but I was not in time—a Manchester man was before me."

"Who is Mr. Melville? any relation to you?" whispered Kenelm to Lily.

"Relation—I scarcely know. Yes, I suppose so, because he is my guardian. But if he were the nearest relation on earth, I could not love him more," said Lily, with impulsive eagerness, her cheeks flushing, her eyes filling with tears.

"And he is an artist—a painter?" asked Kenelm.

"Oh yes; no one paints such beautiful pictures—no one so clever, no one so kind."

Kenelm strove to recollect if he had ever heard the name of Melville as a painter, but in vain. Kenelm, however, knew but little of painters—they were not in his way; and he owned to himself very humbly, that there might be many a living painter of eminent renown whose name and works would be strange to him.

He glanced round the wall,—Lily interpreted his look. "There are no pictures of his here," said she; "there is one in my own room. I will show it you when you come again."

"And now," said Mr. Braefield, rising, "I must just have a word with your gardener, and then go home. We dine earlier here than in London, Mr. Chillingly."

As the two gentlemen, after taking leave, re-entered the hall, Lily followed them and said to Kenelm, "What time will you come to-morrow to see the picture?"

Kenelm averted his head, and then replied, not with his wonted courtesy, but briefly and brusquely—

"I fear I cannot call to-morrow. I shall be far away by sunrise."

Lily made no answer, but turned back into the room.

Mr. Braefield found the gardener watering a flower-border, conferred with him about the

heart's-ease, and then joined Kenelm, who had halted a few yards beyond the garden-gate.

"A pretty little place that," said Mr. Braefield, with a sort of lordly compassion, as became the owner of Braefieldville, "What I call quaint."

"Yes, quaint," echoed Kenelm abstractedly.

"It is always the case with houses enlarged by degrees. I have heard my poor mother say that when Melville or Mrs. Cameron first bought it, it was little better than a mere laborer's cottage, with a field attached to it. And two or three years afterwards a room or so more was built, and a bit of the field taken in for a garden; and then by degrees the whole part now inhabited by the family was built, leaving only the old cottage as a scullery and wash-house; and the whole field was turned into the garden, as you see. But whether it was Melville's money or the aunt's that did it, I don't know. More likely the aunt's. I don't see what interest Melville has in the place; he does not go there often, I fancy—it is not his home."

"Mr. Melville, it seems, is a painter, and, from what I heard you say, a successful one."

"I fancy he had little success before this year. But surely you saw his pictures at the Exhibition?"

"I am ashamed to say I have not been to the Exhibition."

"You surprise me. However, Melville had three pictures there—all very good; but the one I wished to buy made much more sensation than the others, and has suddenly lifted him from obscurity into fame."

"He appears to be a relation of Miss Mordaunt's, but so distant a one, that she could not even tell me what grade of cousinship he could claim."

"Nor can I. He is her guardian, I know. The relationship, if any, must, as you say, be very distant; for Melville is of humble extraction, while any one can see that Mrs. Cameron is a thorough gentlewoman, and Lily Mordaunt is her sister's child. I have heard my mother say that it was Melville, then a very young man, who bought the cottage, perhaps with Mrs. Cameron's money; saying it was for a widowed lady, whose husband had left her with very small means. And when Mrs. Cameron arrived with Lily, then a mere infant, she was in deep mourning, and a very young woman herself—pretty, too. If Melville had been a frequent visitor then, of course there would have been scandal; but he very seldom came, and when he did, he lodged in a cottage, Cromwell Lodge, on the other side of the brook; now and then bringing with him a fellow-lodger—some other young artist, I suppose, for the sake of angling. So there could be no cause for scandal, and nothing can be more blameless than poor Mrs. Cameron's life. My mother, who then resided at Braefieldville, took a great fancy to both Lily and her aunt, and when by degrees the cottage grew into a genteel sort of place, the few gentry in the neighborhood followed my mother's example and were very kind to Mrs. Cameron, so that she has now her place in the society about here, and is much liked."

"And Mr. Melville?—does he still very seldom come here?"

"To say truth, he has not been at all since I settled at Braefieldville. The place was left to my mother for her life, and I was not much there during her occupation. In fact, I was then a junior partner in our firm, and conducted the branch business in New York, coming over to England for my holiday once a year or so. When my mother died, there was much to arrange before I could settle personally in England, and I did not come to settle at Braefieldville till I married. I did see Melville on one of my visits to the place some years ago; but, between ourselves, he is not the sort of person whose intimate acquaintance one would wish to court. My mother told me he was an idle, dissipated man, and I have heard from others that he was very unsteady. Mr.——, the great painter, told me that he was a loose fish; and I suppose his habits were against his getting on, till this year, when, perhaps by a lucky accident, he has painted a picture that raises him to the top of the tree. But is not Miss Lily wondrously nice to look at? What a pity her education has been so much neglected!"

"Has it?"

"Have not you discovered that already? She has not had even a music-master, though my wife says she has a good ear, and can sing prettily enough. As for reading, I don't think she has read anything but fairy tales and poetry, and such silly stuff. However, she is very young yet; and now that her guardian can sell his pictures, it is to be hoped that he will do more justice to his ward. Painters and

actors are not so regular in their private lives as we plain men are, and great allowance is to be made for them; still, every one is bound to do his duty. I am sure you agree with me?"

"Certainly," said Kenelm, with an emphasis which startled the merchant. "That is an admirable maxim of yours: it seems a commonplace, yet how often, when it is put into our heads, it strikes as a novelty. A duty may be a very difficult thing, a very disagreeable thing, and, what is strange, it is often a very invisible thing. It is present—close before us, and yet we don't see it; somebody shouts its name in our ears, 'Duty,' and straight it towers before us a grim giant. Pardon me if I leave you—I can't stay to dine. Duty summons me elsewhere. Make my excuses to Mrs. Braefield."

Before Mr. Braefield could recover his self-possession, Kenelm had vaulted over a stile and was gone.

CHAPTER VI.

Kenelm walked into the shop kept by the Somers's, and found Jessie still at the counter. "Give me back my knapsack. Thank you," he said, flinging the knapsack across his shoulders. "Now, do me a favor. A portmanteau of mine ought to be at the station. Send for it, and keep it till I give further directions. I think of going to Oxford for a day or two. Mrs. Somers, one more word with you. Think, answer frankly, are you, as you said this morning, thoroughly happy, and yet married to the man you loved?"

"Oh, so happy!"

"And wish for nothing beyond? Do not wish Will to be other than he is?"

"God forbid! You frighten me, sir."

"Frighten you! Be it so. Every one who is happy should be frightened, lest happiness fly away. Do your best to chain it, and you will, for you attach Duty to Happiness; and," muttered Kenelm, as he turned from the shop, "Duty is sometimes not a rose-colored tie, but a heavy iron-hued clog."

He strode on through the street towards the sign-post with "To Oxford" inscribed thereon. And whether he spoke literally of the knapsack, or metaphorically of duty, he murmured, as he strode—

"A pedlar's pack that bows the bearer down."

CHAPTER VII.

Kenelm might have reached Oxford that night, for he was a rapid and untirable pedestrian; but he halted a little after the moon rose, and laid himself down to rest beneath a new-mown hay-stack, not very far from the highroad.

He did not sleep. Meditatingly propped on his elbow, he said to himself—

"It is long since I have wondered at nothing. I wonder now: can this be love—really love—unmistakably love? Pooh! it is impossible; the very last person in the world to be in love with. Let us reason upon it—you, myself, and I. To begin with—face! What is face? In a few years the most beautiful face may be very plain. Take the Venus at Florence. Animate her; see her ten years after; a chignon, front teeth (blue or artificially white), mottled complexion, double chin—all that sort of plump prettiness goes into double chin. Face, bah! What man of sense—what pupil of Welby, the realist—can fall in love with a face? and even if I were simpleton enough to do so, pretty faces are as common as daisies. Cecilia Travers has more regular features; Jessie Wiles a richer coloring. I was not in love with them—not a bit of it. Myself, you have nothing to say there. Well, then, mind? Talk of mind, indeed! a creature whose favorite companionship is that of butterflies, and who tells me that butterflies are the souls of infants unbaptized. What an article for 'The Londoner,' on the culture of young women. What a girl for Miss Garret and Miss Emily Faithful! Put aside Mind as we have done Face. What rests?—the Frenchman's ideal of happy marriage? congenial circumstance of birth, fortune, tastes, habits. Worse still. Myself, answer honestly, are you not floored?

Whereon "Myself" took up the parable and answered—"O thou fool! why wert thou so ineffably blest in one presence? Why, in quitting that presence, did Duty become so grim? Why dost thou address to me those inept pedantic questionings, under the light of yon moon, which has suddenly ceased to be to thy thoughts an astronomical body, and has become, for ever and for ever, identified in thy heart's dreams with romance and poesy and first love? Why, instead of gazing on that

uncomfortable orb, art thou not quickening thy steps towards a cozy inn and a good supper at Oxford? Kenelm, my friend, thou art in for it. No disguising the fact—thou art in love!"

"I'll be hanged if I am," said the Second in the Dualism of Kenelm's mind; and therewith he shifted his knapsack into a pillow, turned his eyes from the moon, and still could not sleep. The face of Lily still haunted his eyes—the voice of Lily still rang in his ears.

Oh, my reader! dost thou here ask me to tell thee what Lily was like?—was she dark, was she fair, was she tall, was she short. Never shalt thou learn these secrets from me. Imagine to thyself the being to which thine whole of life, body and mind and soul, moved irresistibly as the needle to the pole. Let her be tall or short, dark or fair, she is that which out of all womankind has suddenly become the one woman for thee. Fortunate art thou, my reader, if thou chance to have heard the popular song of "My Queen" sung by the one lady who alone can sing it with expression worthy the verse of the poetess and the music of the composition, by the sister of the exquisite songstress. But if thou hast not heard the verse thus sung, to an accompaniment thus composed, still the words themselves are, or ought to be, familiar to thee, if thou art, as I take for granted, a lover of the true lyrical muse. Recall then the words supposed to be uttered by him who knows himself destined to do homage to one he has not yet beheld:—

"She is standing somewhere—she I shall honor,
She that I wait for, my queen, my queen;
Whether her hair be golden or raven,
Whether her eyes be hazel or blue,
I know not now, it will be engraven
Some day hence as my loveliest hue.
She may be humble or proud, my lady,
Or that sweet calm which is just between;
But whenever she comes, she will find me ready
To do her homage, my queen, my queen."

Was it possible that the cruel boy-god "who sharpens his arrows on the whetstone of the human heart" had found the moment to avenge himself for the neglect of his altars and the scorn of his power! Must that redoubted knight-errant, the hero of this tale, despite The Three Fishes on his charmed shield, at last veil the crest and bow the knee, and murmur to himself, "She has come, my queen"!

CHAPTER VIII.

The next morning Kenelm arrived at Oxford—"Verum secretumque Mouseion."

If there be a place in this busy island which may distract the passions of youth from love to scholarship, to Ritualism, to mediæval associations, to that sort of poetical sentiment or poetical fanaticism which a Mivers and a Welby and an advocate of the Realistic School would hold in contempt—certainly that place is Oxford. Home, nevertheless, of great thinkers and great actors in the practical world.

The vacation had not yet commenced, but the commencement was near at hand. Kenelm thought he could recognize the leading men by their slower walk and more abstracted expression of countenance. Among the fellows was the eminent author of that book which had so powerfully fascinated the earlier adolescence of Kenelm Chillingly, and who had himself been subject to the fascination of a yet stronger spirit. The Rev. Decimus Roach had been ever an intense and reverent admirer of John Henry Newman—an admirer, I mean, of the pure and lofty character of the man, quite apart from sympathy with his doctrines. But although Roach remained an unconverted Protestant of orthodox, if High Church, creed, yet there was one tenet he did hold in common with the author of the 'Apologia.' He ranked celibacy among the virtues most dear to Heaven. In that eloquent treatise, 'The Approach to the Angels,' he not only maintained that the state of single blessedness was strictly incumbent on every member of a Christian priesthood, but to be commended to the adoption of every conscientious layman.

It was the desire to confer with this eminent theologian that had induced Kenelm to direct his steps to Oxford.

Mr. Roach was a friend of Welby's, at whose house, when a pupil, Kenelm had once or twice met him, and been even more charmed by his conversation than by his treatise. Kenelm called on Mr. Roach, who received him very graciously, and not being a tutor or examiner, placed his time at Kenelm's disposal; took him the round of the colleges and the Bodleian; invited him to dine in his college-hall; and after dinner led him into his own rooms, and gave him an excellent bottle of Chateau Margeaux.

Mr. Roach was somewhere about fifty—a good-looking man, and evidently thought himself so, for he wore his hair long behind and parted in the middle; which is not done by men who form modest estimates of their personal appearance.

Kenelm was not long in drawing out his host on the subject to which that profound thinker had devoted so much meditation.

"I can scarcely convey to you," said Kenelm, "the intense admiration with which I have studied your noble work, 'Approach to the Angels.' It produced a great effect on me in the age between boyhood and youth. But of late some doubts on the universal application of your doctrine have crept into my mind."

"Ay, indeed?" said Mr. Roach, with an expression of interest in his face.

"And I come to you for their solution."

Mr. Roach turned away his head, and pushed the bottle to Kenelm.

"I am quite willing to concede," resumed the heir of the Chillinglys, "that a priesthood should stand apart from the distracting cares of a family, and pure from all carnal affections."

"Hem, hem," grunted Mr. Roach, taking his knee on his lap and caressing it.

"I go farther," continued Kenelm, "and supposing with you that the Confessional has all the importance, whether in its monitory or its cheering effects upon repentant sinners, which is attached to it by the Roman Catholics, and that it ought to be no less cultivated by the Reformed Church, it seems to me essential that the Confessor should have no better half to whom it can be even suspected he may, in an unguarded moment, hint at the frailties of one of her female acquaintances."

"I pushed that argument too far," murmured Roach.

"Not a bit of it. Celibacy in the Confessor stands or falls with the Confessional. Your argument there is as sound as a bell. But when it comes to the layman, I think I detect a difference."

Mr. Roach shook his head, and replied stoutly, "No; if celibacy be incumbent on the one, it is equally incumbent on the other. I say 'if.'"

"Permit me to deny that assertion. Do not fear that I shall insult your understanding by the popular platitude—viz., that if celibacy were universal, in a very few years the human race would be extinct. As you have justly observed, in answer to that fallacy, 'It is the duty of each human soul to strive towards the highest perfection of the spiritual state for itself, and leave the fate of the human race to the care af the Creator.' If celibacy be necessary to spiritual perfection, how do we know but that it may be the purpose and decree of the All Wise that the human race, having attained to that perfection, should disappear from earth? Universal celibacy would thus be the euthanasia of mankind. On the other hand, if the Creator decided that the human race, having culminated to this crowning but barren flower of perfection, should nevertheless continue to increase and multiply upon earth, have you not victoriously exclaimed, 'Presumptuous mortal! how canst thou presume to limit the resources of the Almighty? Would it not be easy for Him to continue some other mode, unexposed to trouble and sin and passsion, as in the nuptials of the vegetable world, by which the generations will be renewed? Can we suppose that the angels—the immortal companies of Heaven—are not hourly increasing in number, and extending their population throughout infinity? and yet in heaven there is no marrying nor giving in marriage.'—All this, clothed by you in words which my memory only serves me to quote imperfectly—all this I unhesitatingly concede."

Mr. Roach rose and brought another bottle of the Chateau Margeaux from his cellaret, filled Kenelm's glass, reseated himself, and took the other knee into his lap to caress.

"But," resumed Kenelm, "my doubt is this."

"Ah!" cried Mr. Roach, "let us hear the doubt."

"In the first place, is celibacy essential to the highest state of spiritual perfection? and, in the second place, if it were, are mortals, as at present constituted, capable of that culmination?"

"Very well put," said Mr. Roach, and he tossed off his glass with more cheerful aspect than he had hitherto exhibited.

"You see," said Kenelm, "we are compelled in this, as in other questions of philosophy, to resort to the inductive process, and draw our theories from the facts within our cognizance. Now, looking round the world, is it the fact that old maids and old bachelors are so much

more spiritually advanced than married folks? Do they pass their time, like an Indian dervish, in serene contemplation of divine excellence and beatitude? Are they not quite as worldly in their own way as persons who have been married as often as the Wife of Bath, and generally speaking, more selfish, more frivolous, and more spiteful? I am sure I don't wish to speak uncharitably against old maids and old bachelors. I have three aunts who are old maids, and fine specimens of the genus; but I am sure they would all three have been more agreeable companions, and quite as spiritually gifted, if they had been happily married, and were caressing their children instead of lap-dogs. So, too, I have an old bachelor-cousin, Chillingly Mivers, whom you know. As clever as a man can be. But, Lord bless you! as to being wrapt in spiritual meditation, he could not be more devoted to the things of earth if he had married as many wives as Solomon, and had as many children as Priam. Finally, have not half the mistakes in the world arisen from a separation between the spiritual and the moral nature of man? Is it not, after all, through his dealings with his fellow-men that man makes his safest 'approach to the angels'? And is not the moral system a very muscular system? Does it not require for healthful vigor plenty of continued exercise, and does it not get that exercise naturally, by the relationships of family, with all the wider collateral struggles with life which the care of family necessitates?

"I put these questions to you with the humblest diffidence. I expect to hear such answers as will thoroughly convince my reason, and I shall be delighted if so. For at the root of the controversy lies the passion of love. And love must be a very disquieting troublesome emotion, and has led many heroes and sages into wonderful weaknesses and follies."

"Gently, gently, Mr. Chillingly; don't exaggerate. Love, no doubt, is—ahem—a disquieting passion. Still, every emotion that changes life from a stagnant pool into the freshness and play of a running stream is disquieting to the pool. Not only love and its fellow-passions—such as ambition—but the exercise of the reasoning faculty, which is always at work in changing our ideas, is very disquieting. Love, Mr. Chillingly, has its good side as well as its bad. Pass the bottle."

KENELM (passing the bottle).—"Yes, yes; you are quite right in putting the adversary's case strongly before you demolish it—all good rhetoricians do that. Pardon me if I am up to that trick in argument. Assume that I know all that can be said in favor of the abnegation of common-sense, euphoniously called 'love,' and proceed to the demolition of the case."

THE REV. DECIMUS ROACH (hesitatingly).—"The demolition of the case? humph! The passions are ingrafted in the human system as part and parcel of it, and are not to be demolished so easily as you seem to think. Love, taken rationally and morally by a man of good education and sound principles, is—is——"

KENELM.—"Well, is what?"

THE REV. DECIMUS ROACH.—"A—a—a—thing not to be despised. Like the sun, it is the great colorist of life, Mr. Chillingly. And you are so right—the mortal system does require daily exercise. What can give that exercise to a solitary man, when he arrives at the practical age in which he cannot sit for six hours at a stretch musing on the divine essence; and rheumatism or other ailments forbid his adventure into the wilds of Africa as a missionary? At that age, Nature, which will be heard, Mr. Chillingly, demands her rights. A sympathizing female companion by one's side; innocent little children climbing one's knee,—lovely, bewitching picture! Who can be Goth enough to rub it out, who fanatic enough to paint over it the image of a St. Simon sitting alone on a pillar! Take another glass. You don't drink enough, Mr. Chillingly."

"I have drunk enough," replied Kenelm, in a sullen voice, "to think I see double. I imagined that before me sate the austere adversary of the insanity of love and the miseries of wedlock. Now, I fancy I listen to a puling sentimentalist uttering the platitudes which the other Decimus Roach had already refuted. Certainly either I see double, or you amuse yourself with mocking my appeal to your wisdom."

"Not so, Mr. Chillingly. But the fact is, that when I wrote that book of which you speak, I was young, and youth is enthusiastic and one-sided. Now, with the same disdain of the excesses to which love may hurry weak intellects, I recognize its benignant effects when taken, as I before said, rationally—taken

rationally, my young friend. At that period of life when the judgment is matured, the soothing companionship of an amiable female cannot but cheer the mind, and prevent that morose hoar-frost into which solitute is chilled and made rigid by increasing years. In short, Mr. Chillingly, having convinced myself that I erred in the opinion once too rashly put forth, I owe it to Truth, I owe it to Mankind, to make my conversion known to the world. And I am about next month to enter into the matrimonial state with a young lady who——"

"Say no more, say no more, Mr. Roach. It must be a painful subject to you. Let us drop it."

"It is not a painful subject at all!" exclaimed Mr. Roach, with warmth. "I look forward to the fulfilment of my duty with the pleasure which a well-trained mind always ought to feel in recanting a fallacious doctrine. But you do me the justice to understand that of course I do not take this step I propose—for my personal satisfaction. No, sir, it is the value of my example to others, which purifies my motives and animates my soul."

After this concluding and noble sentence, the conversation drooped. Host and guest both felt they had had enough of each other. Kenelm soon rose to depart.

Mr. Roach, on taking leave of him at the door, said, with marked emphasis—

"Not for my personal satisfaction—remember that. Whenever you hear my conversion discussed in the world, say that from my lips you heard these words—NOT FOR MY PERSONAL SATISFACTION. No! My kind regards to Welby—a married man himself, and a father; *he* will understand me."

CHAPTER IX.

On quitting Oxford, Kenelm wandered for several days about the country, advancing to no definite goal, meeting with no noticeable adventure. At last he found himself mechanically retracing his steps. A magnetic influence he could not resist drew him back towards the grassy meads and the sparkling rill of Moleswich.

"There must be," said he to himself, "a mental, like an optical, illusion. In the last, we fancy we have seen a spectre. If we dare not face the apparition—dare not attempt to touch it—run superstitiously away from it—what happens? We shall believe to our dying day that it was not an illusion—that it was a spectre—and so we may be crazed for life. But if we manfully walk up to the Phantom, stretch our hands to seize it, lo! it fades into thin air, the cheat of our eyesight is dispelled, and we shall never be ghost-ridden again. So it must be with this mental illusion of mine. I see an image strange to my experience—it seems to me, at that first sight, clothed with a supernatural charm; like an unreasoning coward, I run away from it. It continues to haunt me; I cannot shut out its apparition. It pursues me by day alike in the haunts of men—alike in the solitudes of nature; it visits me by night in my dreams. I begin to say this must be a real visitant from another world—it must be love—the love of which I read in the Poets, as in the Poets I read of witchcraft and ghosts. Surely I must approach that apparition as a philosopher like Sir David Brewster would approach the black cat seated on a hearth-rug, which he tells us that some lady of his acquaintance constantly saw till she went into a world into which black cats are not held to be admitted. The more I think of it the less it appears to me possible that I can be really in love with a wild, half-educated, anomalous creature, merely because the apparition of her face haunts me. With perfect safety, therefore, I can approach that creature; in proportion as I see more of her, the illusion will vanish. I will go back to Moleswich manfully."

Thus said Kenelm to himself, and himself answered—

"Go; for thou canst not help it. Thinkest thou that Daces can escape the net that has meshed a Roach? No—

'Come it will, the day decreed by fate,'

when thou must succumb to the 'nature which will be heard.' Better succumb now, and with a good grace, than resist till thou hast reached thy fiftieth year, and then make a rational choice not for thy personal satisfaction."

Whereupon Kenelm answered to himself, indignantly, "Pooh! thou flippant. My *alter ego*, thou knowest not what thou art talking

about! It is not a question of nature; it is a question of the supernatural—an illusion—a phantom!"

Thus Kenelm and himself continued to quarrel with each other; and the more they quarrelled, the nearer they approached to the haunted spot in which had been seen, and fled from, the fatal apparition of first love.

BOOK SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

SIR PETER had not heard from Kenelm since a letter informing him that his son had left town, on an excursion, which would probably be short, though it might last a few weeks; and the good Baronet now resolved to go to London himself, take his chance of Kenelm's return, and if still absent, at least learn from Mivers and others how far that very eccentric planet had contrived to steer a regular course amidst the fixed stars of the metropolitan system. He had other reasons for his journey. He wished to make the acquaintance of Gordon Chillingly before handing him over the £20,000 which Kenelm had released in that resettlement of estates, the necessary deeds of which the young heir had signed before quitting London for Moleswich. Sir Peter wished still more to see Cecilia Travers, in whom Kenelm's accounts of her had inspired a very strong interest.

The day after his arrival in town Sir Peter breakfasted with Mivers.

"Upon my word you are very comfortable here," said Sir Peter, glancing at the well-appointed table, and round the well-furnished rooms.

"Naturally so—there is no one to prevent my being comfortable. I am not married:—taste that omelette."

"Some men declare they never knew comfort till they were married, cousin Mivers."

"Some men are reflecting bodies, and catch a pallid gleam from the comfort which a wife concentres on herself. With a fortune so modest and secure, what comforts, possessed by me now, would not a Mrs. Chillingly Mivers ravish from my hold and appropriate to herself! Instead of these pleasant rooms, where should I be lodged? In a dingy den looking on a backyard, excluded from the sun by day, and vocal with cats by night; while Mrs. Mivers luxuriated in two drawing-rooms with southern aspect and perhaps a boudoir. My brougham would be torn from my uses and monopolized by 'the angel of my hearth,' clouded in her crinoline and halved by her chignon. No! if ever I marry—and I never deprive myself of the civilities and needlework which single ladies waste upon me, by saying I shall not marry—it will be when women have fully established their rights; for then, men may have a chance of vindicating their own. Then if there are two drawing-rooms in the house, I shall take one, if not, we will toss up who shall have the back parlor; if we keep a brougham, it will be exclusively mine three days in the week; if Mrs. M. wants £200 a-year for her wardrobe, she must be contented with one, the other half will belong to my personal decoration; if I am oppressed by proof sheets and printers' devils, half of the oppression falls to her lot, while I take my holiday on the croquet ground at Wimbledon. Yes, when the present wrongs of women are exchanged for equality with men—I will cheerfully marry; and to do the thing generous, I will not oppose Mrs. M.'s voting in the vestry or for Parliament. I will give her my own votes with pleasure."

"I fear, my dear cousin, that you have infected Kenelm with your selfish ideas on the nuptial state. He does not seem inclined to marry—Eh?"

"Not that I know of."

"What sort of girl is Cecilia Travers?"

"One of those superior girls who are not likely to tower into that terrible giantess called 'a superior woman.' A handsome, well-educated, sensible young lady. Not spoilt by being an heiress—in fine, just the sort of girl whom you could desire to fix on for a daughter-in-law."

"And you don't think Kenelm has a fancy for her?"

"Honestly speaking—I do not."

"Any counter-attraction? There are some things in which sons do not confide in their fathers. You have never heard that Kenelm has been a little wild?"

"Wild he is, as the noble savage who ran in woods," said cousin Mivers.

"You frighten me!"

"Before the noble savage ran across the squaws, and was wise enough to run away from them. Kenelm has run away now somewhere."

"Yes, he does not tell me where, nor do they know at his lodgings. A heap of notes on his table and no directions where they are to be forwarded. On the whole, however, he has held his own in London society—Eh?"

"Certainly! he has been more courted than most young men, and perhaps more talked of. Oddities generally are."

"You own he has talents above the average? Do you not think he will make a figure in the world some day, and discharge that debt to the literary stores or the political interests of his country, which alas, I and my predecessors, the other Sir Peters, failed to do; and for which I hailed his birth, and gave him the name of Kenelm?"

"Upon my word," answered Mivers—who had now finished his breakfast, retreated to an easy chair, and taken from the chimney-piece one of his famous trabucos,—"upon my word, I can't guess; if some great reverse of fortune befell him, and he had to work for his livelihood, or if some other direful calamity gave a shock to his nervous system and jolted it into a fussy fidgety direction, I dare say he might make a splash in that current of life which bears men on to the grave. But you see he wants, as he himself very truly says, the two stimulants to definite action—poverty and vanity."

"Surely there have been great men who were neither poor nor vain?"

"I doubt it. But vanity is a ruling motive that takes many forms and many aliases—call it ambition, call it love of fame, still its substance is the same—the desire of applause carried into fussiness of action."

"There may be the desire for abstract truth without care for applause."

"Certainly. A philosopher on a desert island may amuse himself by meditating on the distinction between light and heat. But if on returning to the world he publish the result of his meditations, vanity steps in, and desires to be applauded."

"Nonsense, cousin Mivers, he may rather desire to be of use and benefit to mankind. You don't deny that there is such a thing as philanthropy."

"I don't deny that there is such a thing as humbug. And whenever I meet a man who has the face to tell me, that he is taking a great deal of trouble, and putting himself very much out of his way, for a philanthropical object, without the slightest idea of reward either in praise or pence, I know that I have a humbug before me—a dangerous humbug—a swindling humbug—a fellow with his pocket full of villanous prospectuses and appeals to subscribers."

"Pooh, pooh; leave off that affectation of cynicism; you are not a bad-hearted fellow—you must love mankind—you must have an interest in the welfare of posterity."

"Love mankind? Interest in posterity? Bless my soul, cousin Peter, I hope you have no prospectuses in *your* pockets; no schemes for draining the Pontine Marshes out of pure love to mankind; no propositions for doubling the income tax, as a reserve fund for posterity, should our coalfields fail three thousand years hence. Love of mankind! Rubbish! This comes of living in the country."

"But you do love the human race—you do care for the generations that are to come."

"I! Not a bit of it. On the contrary, I rather dislike the human race, taking it altogether, and including the Australian bushmen; and I don't believe any man who tells me that he would grieve half as much if ten millions of human beings were swallowed up by an earthquake at a considerable distance from his own residence, say Abyssinia, as he would for a rise in his butcher's bills. As to posterity, who would consent to have a month's fit of the gout

or tic-douloureux in order that in the fourth thousand year, A.D., posterity should enjoy a perfect system of sewage."

Sir Peter, who had recently been afflicted by a very sharp attack of neuralgia, shook his head, but was too conscientious not to keep slience.

"To turn the subject," said Mivers, relighting the cigar which he had laid aside while delivering himself of his amiable opinions, "I think you would do well, while in town, to call on your old friend Travers, and be introduced to Cecilia. If you think as favorably of her as I do, why not ask father and daughter to pay you a visit at Exmundham? Girls think more about a man when they see the place which he can offer to them as a home, and Exmundham is an attractive place to girls—picturesque and romantic."

"A very good idea," cried Sir Peter, heartily. "And I want also to make the acquaintance of Chillingly Gordon. Give me his address."

"Here is his card on the chimney-piece, take it; you will always find him at home till two o'clock. He is too sensible to waste the forenoon in riding out in Hyde Park with young ladies."

"Give me your frank opinion of that young kinsman. Kenelm tells me that he is clever and ambitious."

"Kenelm speaks truly. He is not a man who will talk stuff about love of mankind and posterity. He is of our day, with large keen wide-awake eyes, that look only on such portions of mankind as can be of use to him—and do not spoil their sight by poring through cracked telescopes, to catch a glimpse of posterity. Gordon is a man to be a Chancellor of the Exchequer, perhaps a Prime Minister."

"And old Gordon's son is cleverer than my boy—than the namesake of Kenelm Digby!" and Sir Peter sighed.

"I did not say that. I am cleverer than Chillingly Gordon, and the proof of it is that I am too clever to wish to be Prime Minister—very disagreeable office—hard work—irregular hours for meals—much abuse and confirmed dyspepsia."

Sir Peter went away rather down-hearted. He found Chillingly Gordon at home in a lodging in Jermyn Street. Though prepossessed against him by all he had heard, Sir Peter was soon propitiated in his favor. Gordon had a frank man-of-the-world way with him, and much too fine a tact to utter any sentiments likely to displease an old-fashioned country gentleman, and a relation who might possibly be of service in his career. He touched briefly, and with apparent feeling, on the unhappy litigation commenced by his father; spoke with affectionate praise of Kenelm; and with a discriminating good nature of Mivers, as a man who, to parody the epigram on Charles II.,

> "Never says a kindly thing
> And never does a harsh one."

Then he drew Sir Peter on to talk of the country and agricultural prospects. Learned that among his objects in visiting town, was the wish to inspect a patented hydraulic ram that might be very useful for his farmyard, which was ill supplied with water. Startled the Baronet by evincing some practical knowledge of mechanics; insisted on accompanying him to the city to inspect the ram; did so, and approved the purchase; took him next to see a new American reaping-machine, and did not part with him till he had obtained Sir Peter's promise to dine with him at the Garrick; an invitation peculiarly agreeable to Sir Peter, who had a natural curiosity to see some of the more recently distinguished frequenters of that social club. As, on quitting Gordon, Sir Peter took his way to the house of Leopold Travers, his thoughts turned with much kindliness towards his young kinsman. "Mivers and Kenelm," quoth he to himself, "gave me an unfavorable impression of this lad; they represent him as worldly, self-seeking, and so forth. But Mivers takes such cynical views of character, and Kenelm is too eccentric to judge fairly of a sensible man of the world. At all events, it is not like an egotist to put himself out of his way to be so civil to an old fellow like me. A young man about town must have pleasanter modes of passing his day than inspecting hydraulic rams and reaping-machines. Clever they allow him to be. Yes, decidedly clever—and not offensively clever—practical."

Sir Peter found Travers in the dining-room with his daughter, Mrs. Campion, and Lady Glenalvon. Travers was one of those men rare in middle age, who are more often to be found in their drawing-room than in their private study; he was fond of female society.

and perhaps it was this predilection which contributed to preserve in him the charm of good breeding and winning manners. The two men had not met for many years; not indeed since Travers was at the zenith of his career of fashion, and Sir Peter was one of those pleasant *dilettanti* and half-humoristic conversationalists who become popular and courted diners-out.

Sir Peter had originally been a moderate Whig because his father had been one before him, but he left the Whig party with the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Stanley (afterwards Lord Derby), and others, when it seemed to him that that party had ceased to be moderate.

Leopold Travers had, as a youth in the Guards, been a high Tory, but, siding with Sir Robert Peel on the repeal of the Corn Laws, remained with the Peelites after the bulk of the Tory party had renounced the guidance of their former chief, and now went with these Peelites in whatever direction the progress of the age might impel their strides in advance of Whigs and in defiance of Tories.

However, it is not the politics of these two gentlemen that are in question now. As I have just said, they had not met for many years. Travers was very little changed. Sir Peter recognized him at a glance; Sir Peter was much changed, and Travers hesitated before, on hearing his name announced, he felt quite sure that it was the right Sir Peter towards whom he advanced, and to whom he extended his cordial hand. Travers preserved the color of his hair and the neat proportions of his figure, and was as scrupulously well dressed as in his dandy days. Sir Peter, originally very thin and with fair locks and dreamy blue eyes, had now become rather portly, at least towards the middle of him—very gray—had long ago taken to spectacles—his dress, too, was very old-fashioned, and made by a country tailor. He looked quite as much a gentleman as Travers did; quite perhaps as healthy, allowing for difference of years; quite as likely to last his time. But between them was the difference of the nervous temperament and the lymphatic. Travers, with less brain than Sir Peter, had kept his brain constantly active; Sir Peter had allowed his brain to dawdle over old books and lazy delight in letting the hours slip by. Therefore Travers still looked young—alert—up to his day, up to anything; while Sir Peter, entering that drawing-room, seemed a sort of Rip van Winkle who had slept through the past generation, and looked on the present with eyes yet drowsy. Still, in those rare moments when he was thoroughly roused up, there would have been found in Sir Peter a glow of heart, nay, even a vigor of thought, much more expressive than the constitutional alertness that characterized Leopold Travers, of the attributes we most love and admire in the young.

"My dear Sir Peter, is it you? I am so glad to see you again," said Travers. "What an age since we met, and how condescendingly kind you were then to me; silly fop that I was! But bygones are bygones; come to the present. Let me introduce to you, first, my valued friend, Mrs. Campion, whose distinguished husband you remember. Ah, what pleasant meetings we had at his house! And next, that young lady of whom she takes motherly charge; my daughter Cecilia. Lady Glenalvon, your wife's friend, of course needs no introduction, time stands still with her."

Sir Peter lowered his spectacles, which in reality he only wanted for books in small print, and gazed attentively on the three ladies—at each gaze a bow. But while his eyes were still lingeringly fixed on Cecilia, Lady Glenalvon advanced, naturally in right of rank and the claim of old acquaintance, the first of the three to greet him.

"Alas, my dear Sir Peter! time does not stand still for any of us; but what matter, if it leaves pleasant footprints! When I see you again, my youth comes before me. My early friend, Caroline Brotherton, now Lady Chillingly; our girlish walks with each other; wreaths and ball-dresses the practical topic; prospective husbands, the dream at a distance. Come and sit here: tell me all about Caroline."

Sir Peter, who had little to say about Caroline that could possibly interest anybody but himself, nevertheless took his seat beside Lady Glenalvon, and, as in duty bound, made the most flattering account of his She Baronet which experience or invention would allow. All the while, however, his thoughts were on Kenelm, and his eyes on Cecilia.

Cecilia resumes some mysterious piece of lady's work—no matter what—perhaps embroidery for a music-stool, perhaps a pair of slippers for her father (which, being rather

vain of his feet and knowing they looked best in plain morocco, he will certainly never wear). Cecilia appears absorbed in her occupation; but her eyes and her thoughts are on Sir Peter. Why, my lady reader may guess. And oh, so flatteringly, so lovingly fixed! She thinks he has a most charming, intelligent, benignant countenance. She admires even his old-fashioned frock-coat, high neckcloth, and strapped trousers. She venerates his gray hairs, pure of dye. She tries to find a close resemblance between that fair, blue-eyed, plumpish, elderly gentleman and the lean, dark-eyed, saturnine, lofty Kenelm; she detects the likeness which nobody else would. She begins to love Sir Peter, though he has not said a word to her.

Ah! on this, a word for what it is worth to you, my young readers. You, sir, wishing to marry a girl who is to be deeply, lastingly in love with you, and a thoroughly good wife practically, consider well how she takes to your parents—how she attaches to them an inexpressible sentiment, a disinterested reverence—even should you but dimly recognize the sentiment, or feel the reverence, how if between you and your parents some little cause of coldness arise, she will charm you back to honor your father and your mother, even though they are not particularly genial to her—well, if you win that sort of girl as your wife, think you have got a treasure. You have won a woman to whom Heaven has given the two best attributes—intense feeling of love, intense sense of duty. What, my dear lady reader, I say of one sex, I say of another, though in a less degree; because a girl who marries becomes of her husband's family, and the man does not become of his wife's. Still I distrust the depth of any man's love to a woman, if he does not feel a great degree of tenderness (and forbearance where differences arise) for her parents. But the wife must not so put them in the foreground as to make the husband think he is cast into the cold of the shadow. Pardon this intolerable length of digression, dear reader—it is not altogether a digression, for it belongs to my tale that you should clearly understand the sort of girl that is personified in Cecilia Travers.

"What has become of Kenelm?" asks Lady Glenalvon.

"I wish I could tell you," answers Sir Peter. "He wrote me word that he was going forth on rambles into 'fresh woods and pastures new,' perhaps for some weeks. I have not had a word from him since."

"You make me uneasy," said Lady Glenalvon. "I hope nothing can have happened to him—he cannot have fallen ill."

Cecilia stops her work, and looks up wistfully.

"Make your mind easy," said Travers with a laugh; "I am in his secret. He has challenged the champion of England, and gone into the country to train."

"Very likely," said Sir Peter, quietly; "I should not be in the least surprised, should you, Miss Travers?"

"I think it more probable that Mr. Chillingly is doing some kindness to others which he wishes to keep concealed."

Sir Peter was pleased with this reply, and drew his chair nearer to Cecilia's. Lady Glenalvon, charmed to bring those two together, soon rose and took leave.

Sir Peter remained nearly an hour talking chiefly with Cecilia, who won her way into his heart with extraordinary ease; and he did not quit the house till he had engaged her father, Mrs. Campion, and herself to pay him a week's visit at Exmundham, towards the end of the London season, which was fast approaching.

Having obtained this promise, Sir Peter went away, and ten minutes after Mr. Gordon Chillingly entered the drawing-room. He had already established a visiting acquaintance with the Traverses. Travers had taken a liking to him. Mrs. Campion found him an extremely well-informed, unaffected young man, very superior to young men in general. Cecilia was cordially polite to Kenelm's cousin.

Altogether that was a very happy day for Sir Peter. He enjoyed greatly his dinner at the Garrick, where he met some old acquaintances, and was presented to some new "celebrities." He observed that Gordon stood well with these eminent persons. Though as yet undistinguished himself, they treated him with a certain respect, as well as with evident liking. The most eminent of them, at least the one with the most solidly-established reputation, said in Sir Peter's ear, "You may be proud of your nephew, Gordon!"

"He is not my nephew, only the son of a very distant cousin."

"Sorry for that. But he will shed lustre

on kinsfolk, however distant. Clever fellow, yet popular; rare combination—sure to rise."

Sir Peter suppressed a gulp in the throat. "Ah, if some one as eminent had spoken thus of Kenelm!"

But he was too generous to allow that half-envious sentiment to last more than a moment. Why should he not be proud of any member of the family who could irradiate the antique obscurity of the Chillingly race? And how agreeable this clever young man made himself to Sir Peter!

The next day Gordon insisted on accompanying him to see the latest acquisitions in the British Museum, and various other exhibitions, and went at night to the Prince of Wales's Theatre, where Sir Peter was infinitely delighted with an admirable little comedy by Mr. Robertson, admirably placed on the stage by Maria Wilton. The day after, when Gordon called on him at his hotel, he cleared his throat, and thus plunged at once into the communication he had hitherto delayed.

"Gordon, my boy, I owe you a debt, and I am now, thanks to Kenelm, able to pay it."

Gordon gave a little start of surprise, but remained silent.

"I told your father, shortly after Kenelm was born, that I meant to give up my London house, and lay by £1,000 a-year for you, in compensation for your chance of succeeding to Exmundham should I have died childless. Well, your father did not seem to think much of that promise, and went to law with me about certain unquestionable rights of mine. How so clever a man could have made such a mistake, would puzzle me, if I did not remember that he had a quarrelsome temper. Temper is a thing that often dominates cleverness—an uncontrollable thing; and allowances must be made for it. Not being of a quarrelsome temper myself (the Chillinglys are a placid race), I did not make the allowance for your father's differing, and (for a Chillingly) abnormal, constitution. The language and the tone of his letter respecting it nettled me. I did not see why, thus treated, I should pinch myself to lay by a thousand a-year. Facilities for buying a property most desirable for the possessor of Exmundham presented themselves. I bought it with borrowed money, and though I gave up the house in London, I did not lay by the thousand a-year."

"My dear Sir Peter, I have always regretted that my poor father was misled—perhaps out of too paternal a care for my supposed interests—into that unhappy and fruitless litigation, after which no one could doubt that any generous intentions on your part would be finally abandoned. It has been a grateful surprise to me that I have been so kindly and cordially received into the family by Kenelm and yourself. Pray oblige me by dropping all reference to pecuniary matters—the idea of compensation to a very distant relative for the loss of expectations he had no right to form, is too absurd, for me at least, ever to entertain."

"But I am absurd enough to entertain it—though you express yourself in a very high-minded way. To come to the point, Kenelm is of age, and we have cut off the entail. The estate of course remains absolutely with Kenelm to dispose of, as it did before, and we must take it for granted that he will marry; at all events he cannot fall into your poor father's error; but whatever Kenelm hereafter does with his property, it is nothing to you, and is not to be counted upon. Even the title dies with Kenelm if he has no son. On resettling the estate, however, sums of money have been released which, as I stated before, enable me to discharge the debt which, Kenelm heartily agrees with me, is due to you. £20,000 are now lying at my bankers' to be transferred to yours; meanwhile, if you will call on my solicitor, Mr. Vining, Lincoln's-inn, you can see the new deed, and give to him your receipt for the £20,000 for which he holds my check. Stop—stop—stop—I will not hear a word—no thanks, they are not due."

Here Gordon, who had during this speech uttered various brief exclamations, which Sir Peter did not heed, caught hold of his kinsman's hand, and, despite of all struggles, pressed his lips on it. "I must thank you, I must give some vent to my emotions," cried Gordon. "This sum, great in itself, is far more to me than you can imagine—it opens my career—it assures my future."

"So Kenelm tells me: he said that sum would be more use to you now than ten times the amount twenty years hence."

"So it will—it will. And Kenelm consents to this sacrifice?"

"Consents—urges it!"

Gordon turned away his face, and Sir Peter

resumed: "You want to get into Parliament; very natural ambition for a clever young fellow. I don't presume to dictate politics to you. I hear you are what is called a liberal; a man may be a liberal, I suppose, without being a Jacobin."

"I hope so, indeed. For my part I am anything but a violent man."

"Violent, no! Who ever heard of a violent Chillingly? But I was reading in the newspaper to-day a speech addressed to some populous audience, in which the orator was for dividing all the land and all the capital belonging to other people among the working class, calmly and quietly, without any violence, and deprecating violence; but saying, perhaps very truly, that the people to be robbed might not like it, and might offer violence; in which case woe betide them—it was they who would be guilty of violence—and they must take the consequences if they resisted the reasonable propositions of himself and his friends! That, I suppose, is among the new ideas with which Kenelm is more familiar than I am. Do you entertain those new ideas?"

"Certainly not—I despise the fools who do."

"And you will not abet revolutionary measures if you get into Parliament?"

"My dear Sir Peter—I fear you have heard very false reports of my opinions if you put such questions. Listen," and therewith Gordon launched into dissertations very clever, very subtle, which committed him to nothing, beyond the wisdom of guiding popular opinion into right directions; what might be right directions he did not define, he left Sir Peter to guess them. Sir Peter did guess them, as Gordon meant he should, to be the directions which he, Sir Peter, thought right; and he was satisfied.

That subject disposed of, Gordon said, with much apparent feeling, "May I ask you to complete the favors you have lavished on me. I have never seen Exmundham, and the home of the race from which I sprang has a deep interest for me. Will you allow me to spend a few days with you, and under the shade of your own trees take lessons in political science from one who has evidently reflected on it profoundly?"

"Profoundly—no—a little—a little, as a mere bystander," said Sir Peter, modestly, but much flattered. "Come, my dear boy, by all means; you will have a hearty welcome. By-the-by, Travers and his handsome daughter promised to visit me in about a fortnight, why not come at the same time?"

A sudden flash lit up the young man's countenance. "I shall be so delighted," he cried. "I am but slightly acquainted with Mr. Travers, but I like him much, and Mrs. Campion is so well informed."

"And what say you to the girl?"

"The girl, Miss Travers. Oh, she is very well in her way. But I don't talk with young ladies more than I can help."

"Then you are like your cousin Kenelm?"

"I wish I were like him in other things."

"No, one such oddity in a family is quite enough. But though I would not have you change to a Kenelm, I would not change Kenelm for the most perfect model of a son that the world can exhibit." Delivering himself of this burst of parental fondness, Sir Peter shook hands with Gordon, and walked off to Mivers, who was to give him luncheon, and then accompany him to the station. Sir Peter was to return to Exmundham by the afternoon express.

Left alone, Gordon indulged in one of those luxurious guesses into the future which form the happiest moments in youth, when so ambitious as his. The sum Sir Peter placed at his disposal would insure his entrance into Parliament. He counted with confidence on early successes there. He extended the scope of his views. With such successes he might calculate with certainty on a brilliant marriage, augmenting his fortune, and confirming his position. He had previously fixed his thoughts on Cecilia Travers—I will do him the justice to say not from mercenary motives alone, but not certainly with the impetuous ardor of youthful love. He thought her exactly fitted to be the wife of an eminent public man, in person, acquirement, dignified yet popular manners. He esteemed her, he liked her, and then her fortune would add solidity to his position. In fact, he had that sort of rational attachment to Cecilia which wise men, like Lord Bacon and Montaigne, would commend to another wise man seeking a wife. What opportunities of awaking in herself a similar, perhaps a warmer, attachment the visit to Exmundham would afford! He had learned when he had called on the Traverses that they were going thither,

and hence that burst of family sentiment which had procured the invitation to himself.

But he must be cautious, he must not prematurely awaken Travers' suspicions. He was not as yet a match that the squire could approve of for his heiress. And, though he was ignorant of Sir Peter's designs on that young lady, he was much too prudent to confide his own to a kinsman, of whose discretion he had strong misgivings. It was enough for him at present that way was opened for his own resolute energies. And cheerfully, though musingly, he weighed its obstacles, and divined its goal, as he paced his floor with bended head and restless strides, now quick, now slow.

Sir Peter, in the mean while, found a very good luncheon prepared for him at Mivers's rooms, which he had all to himself, for his host never "spoilt his dinner and insulted his breakfast" by that intermediate meal. He remained at his desk writing brief notes of business, or of pleasure, while Sir Peter did justice to lamb cutlets and grilled chicken. But he looked up from his task, with raised eyebrows, when Sir Peter, after a somewhat discursive account of his visit to the Traverses, his admiration of Cecilia, and the adroitness with which, acting on his cousin's hint, he had engaged the family to spend a few days at Exmundham, added, "And, by-the-by, I have asked young Gordon to meet them."

"To meet them; meet Mr. and Miss Travers! you have? I thought you wished Kenelm to marry Cecilia. I was mistaken, you meant Gordon!"

"Gordon," exclaimed Sir Peter, dropping his knife and fork. "Nonsense, you don't suppose that Miss Travers prefers him to Kenelm, or that he has the presumption to fancy that her father would sanction his addresses."

"I indulge in no suppositions of the sort. I content myself with thinking that Gordon is clever, insinuating, young; and it is a very good chance of bettering himself that you have thrown in his way. However, it is no affair of mine; and though on the whole I like Kenelm better than Gordon, still I like Gordon very well, and I have an interest in following his career which I can't say I have in conjecturing what may be Kenelm's—more likely no career at all."

"Mivers, you delight in provoking me; you do say such uncomfortable things. But, in the first place, Gordon spoke rather slightingly of Miss Travers."

"Ah, indeed; that's a bad sign," muttered Mivers.

Sir Peter did not hear him, and went on.

"And, besides, I feel pretty sure that the dear girl has already a regard for Kenelm which allows no room for a rival. However, I shall not forget your hint, but keep a sharp look-out; and if I see the young man wants to be too sweet on Cecilia, I shall cut short his visit."

"Give yourself no trouble in the matter; it will do no good. Marriages are made in heaven. Heaven's will be done. If I can get away I will run down to you for a day or two. Perhaps in that case you can ask Lady Glenalvon. I like her, and she likes Kenelm. Have you finished? I see the brougham is at the door, and we have to call at your hotel to take up your carpet-bag."

Mivers was deliberately sealing his notes while he thus spoke. He now rang for his servant, gave orders for their delivery, and then followed Sir Peter downstairs and into the brougham. Not a word would he say more about Gordon, and Sir Peter shrank from telling him about the £20,000. Chillingly Mivers was perhaps the last person to whom Sir Peter would be tempted to parade an act of generosity. Mivers migh tnot unfrequently do a generous act himself, provided it was not divulged; but he had always a sneer for the generosity of others.

CHAPTER II.

Wandering back towards Moleswich, Kenelm found himself a little before sunset on the banks of the garrulous brook, almost opposite to the house inhabited by Lily Mordaunt. He stood long and silently by the grassy margin, his dark shadow falling over the stream, broken into fragments by the eddy and strife of waves, fresh from their leap down the neighboring waterfall. His eyes rested on the house and the garden lawn in the front. The upper windows were open. "I wonder which is hers," he said to himself. At last he caught a glimpse of the gardener, bending over a flower border with his watering-pot, and then moving slowly

through the little shrubbery, no doubt to his own cottage. Now the lawn was solitary, save that a couple of thrushes dropped suddenly on the sward.

"Good evening, sir," said a voice. "A capital spot for trout this."

Kenelm turned his head, and beheld on the footpath, just behind him, a respectable elderly man, apparently of the class of a small retail tradesman, with a fishing-rod in his hand and a basket belted to his side.

"For trout," replied Kenelm; "I dare say. A strangely attractive spot indeed."

"Are you an angler, sir, if I may make bold to inquire?" asked the elderly man, somewhat perhaps puzzled as to the rank of the stranger; noticing, on the one hand, his dress and his mien, on the other, slung to his shoulders, the worn and shabby knapsack which Kenelm had carried, at home and abroad, the preceding year.

"Aye, I am an angler."

"Then this is the best place in the whole stream. Look, sir, there is Izaak Walton's summer-house; and further down you see that white, neat-loooking house. Well, that is my house, sir, and I have an apartment which I let to gentlemen anglers. It is generally occupied throughout the summer months. I expect every day to have a letter to engage it, but it is vacant now. A very nice apartment, sir,—sitting-room and bed-room."

"*Descende cœlo, et dic age tibia,*" said Kenelm.

"Sir!" said the elderly man.

"I beg you ten thousand pardons. I have had the misfortune to have been at the university, and to have learned a little Latin, which sometimes comes back very inopportunely. But, speaking in plain English, what I meant to say is this: I invoked the Muse to descend from heaven and bring with her—the original says a fife, but I meant—a fishing-rod. I should think your apartment would suit me exactly; pray show it to me."

"With the greatest pleasure," said the elderly man. "The Muse need not bring a fishing-rod! we have all sorts of tackle at your service, and a boat too, if you care for that. The stream hereabouts is so shallow and narrow that a boat is of little use till you get farther down."

"I don't want to get farther down; but should I want to get to the opposite bank, without wading across, would the boat take me, or is there a bridge?"

"The boat can take you. It is a flat-bottomed punt, and there is a bridge too for foot-passengers, just opposite my house; and between this and Moleswich, where the stream widens, there is a ferry. The stone bridge for traffic is at the farther end of the town."

"Good. Let us go at once to your house."

The two men walked on.

"By-the-by," said Kenelm as they walked, "do you know much of the family who inhabit the pretty cottage on the opposite side, which we have just left behind?"

"Mrs. Cameron's. Yes, of course, a very good lady; and Mr. Melvillle, the painter. I am sure I ought to know, for he has often lodged with me when he came to visit Mrs. Cameron. He recommends my apartment to his friends, and they are my best lodgers. I like painters, sir, though I don't know much about paintings. They are pleasant gentlemen, and easily contented with my humble roof and fare."

"You are quite right. I don't know much about paintings myself, but I am inclined to believe that painters, judging not from what I have seen of them, for I have not a single acquaintance among them personally, but from what I have read of their lives, are, as a general rule, not only pleasant but noble gentlemen. They form within themselves desires to beautify or exalt commonplace things, and they can only accomplish their desires by a constant study of what is beautiful and what is exalted. A man constantly so engaged ought to be a very noble gentleman, even though he may be the son of a shoeblack. And living in a higher world than we do, I can conceive that he is, as you say, very well contented with humble roof and fare in the world we inhabit."

"Exactly, sir; I see—I see now, though you put it in a way that never struck me before."

"And yet," said Kenelm, looking benignly at the speaker, "you seem to me a well-educated and intelligent man; reflective on things in general, without being unmindful of your interests in particular, especially when you have lodgings to let. Do not be offended. That sort of man is not perhaps born to be a painter, but I respect him highly. The world, sir, requires the vast majority of its inhabitants to live in it—to live by it. 'Each for himself,

and God for us all.' The greatest happiness of the greatest number is best secured by a prudent consideration for Number One."

Somewhat to Kenelm's surprise (allowing that he had now learned enough of life to be occasionally surprised) the elderly man here made a dead halt, stretched out his hand cordially, and cried, "Hear, hear! I see that, like me, you are a decided democrat."

"Democrat! Pray, may I ask, not why you are one—that would be a liberty, and democrats resent any liberty taken with themselves—but why you suppose I am?"

"You spoke of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. That is a democratic sentiment surely! Besides, did not you say, sir, that painters—painters, sir, painters, even if they were the sons of shoeblacks, were the true gentlemen—the true noblemen?"

"I did not say that exactly, to the disparagement of other gentlemen and nobles. But if I did, what then?"

"Sir, I agree with you. I despise rank, I despise dukes, and earls, and aristocrats. 'An honest man's the noblest work of God.' Some poet says that. I think Shakespeare. Wonderful man, Shakespeare. A tradesman's son—butcher, I believe. Eh! My uncle was a butcher, and might have been an alderman. I go along with you heartily, heartily. I am a democrat, every inch of me. Shake hands, sir—shake hands; we are all equals. 'Each for himself, and God for us all.'"

"I have no objection to shake hands," said Kenelm; "but don't let me owe your condescension to false pretences. Though we are all equal before the law, except the rich man, who has little chance of justice as against a poor man when submitted to an English jury, yet I utterly deny that any two men you select can be equals. One must beat the other in something, and when one man beats another, democracy ceases and aristocracy begins."

"Aristocracy! I don't see that. What do you mean by aristocracy?"

"The ascendancy of the better man. In a rude State the better man is the stronger; in a corrupt State, perhaps the more roguish; in modern republics the jobbers get the money and the lawyers get the power. In well-ordered States alone aristocracy appears at its genuine worth: the better man in birth, because respect for ancestry secures a higher standard of honor; the better man in wealth, because of the immense uses to enterprise, energy, and the fine arts, which rich men must be if they follow their natural inclinations; the better man in character, the better man in ability, for reasons too obvious to define; and these two last will beat the others in the government of the State, if the State be flourishing and free. All these four classes of better men constitute true aristocracy; and when a better government than a true aristocracy shall be devised by the wit of man, we shall not be far off from the Millennium and the reign of saints. But here we are at the house—yours, is it not? I like the look of it extremely."

The elderly man now entered the little porch over which clambered honeysuckle and ivy intertwined, and ushered Kenelm into a pleasant parlor, with a bay window, and an equally pleasant bedroom behind it.

"Will it do, sir?"

"Perfectly. I take it from this moment. My knapsack contains all I shall need for the night. There is a portmanteau of mine at Mr. Somers' shop, which can be sent here in the morning."

"But we have not settled about the terms," said the elderly man, beginning to fell rather doubtful whether he ought thus to have installed in his home a stalwart pedestrian of whom he knew nothing, and who, though talking glibly enough on other things, had preserved an ominous silence on the subject of payment.

"Terms—true, name them."

"Including board?"

"Certainly. Chameleons life on air, Democrats on wind-bags. I have a more vulgar appetite, and require mutton."

"Meat is very dear nowadays," said the elderly man, "and I am afraid, for board and lodging, I cannot charge you less than £3 3s.—say £3 a-week. My lodgers usually pay a week in advance."

"Agreed," said Kenelm, extracting three sovereigns from his purse. "I have dined already—I want nothing more this evening; let me detain you no further. Be kind enough to shut the door after you."

When he was alone, Kenelm seated himself in the recess of the bay window, against the casement, and looked forth intently. Yes—he was right—he could see from thence the home

of Lily. Not, indeed, more than a white gleam of the house through the interstices of trees and shrubs—but the gentle lawn sloping to the brook, with the great willow at the end dipping its boughs into the water, and shutting out all view beyond itself by its bower of tender leaves. The young man bent his face on his hands and mused dreamily: the evening deepened, the stars came forth, the rays of the moon now peered aslant through the arching dips of the willow, silvering their way as they stole to the waves below.

"Shall I bring lights, sir? or do you prefer a lamp or candles?" asked a voice behind—the voice of the elderly man's wife. "Do you like the shutters closed?"

The questions startled the dreamer. They seemed mocking his own old mockings on the romance of love. Lamp or candles, practical lights for prosaic eyes, and shutters closed against moon and stars!

"Thank you, ma'am, not yet," he said; and rising quietly he placed his hand on the window-sill, swung himself through the open casement, and passed slowly along the margin of the rivulent, by a path checkered alternately with shade and starlight; the moon yet more slowly rising above the willows, and lengthening its track along the wavelets.

CHAPTER III.

Though Kenelm did not think it necessary at present to report to his parents, or his London acquaintances, his recent movements and his present resting place, it never entered into his head to lurk *perdu* in the immediate vicinity of Lily's house, and seek opportunities of meeting her clandestinely. He walked to Mrs. Braefield's the next morning, found her at home, and said in rather a more off-hand manner than was habitual to him, "I have hired a lodging in your neigborhood, on the banks of the brook, for the sake of its trout-fishing. So you will allow me to call on you sometimes, and one of these days I hope you will give me the dinner that I so unceremoniously rejected some days ago. I was then summoned away suddenly, much against my will."

"Yes; my husband said that you shot off from him with a wild exclamation about duty."

"Quite true; my reason, and I may say my conscience, were greatly perplexed upon a matter extremely important and altogether new to me. I went to Oxford—the place above all others in which questions of reason and conscience are most deeply considered, and perhaps least satisfactorily solved. Relieved in my mind by my visit to a distinguished ornament of that university, I felt I might indulge in a summer holiday, and here I am."

"Ah! I understand. You had religious doubts—thought perhaps of turning Roman Catholic. I hope you are not going to do so?"

"My doubts were not necessarily of a religious nature. Pagans have entertained them."

"Whatever they were I am pleased to see they did not prevent your return," said Mrs. Braefield, graciously. "But where have you found a lodging—why not have come to us? My husband would have been scarcely less glad than myself to receive you."

"You say that so sincerely, and so cordially, that to answer by a brief 'I thank you' seems rigid and heartless. But there are times in life when one yearns to be alone—to commune with one's own heart, and, if possible, be still; I am in one of those moody times. Bear with me."

Mrs. Braefield looked at him with affectionate, kindly interest. She had gone before him through the solitary load of young romance. She remembered her dreamy, dangerous girlhood, when she, too, had yearned to be alone.

"Bear with you—yes, indeed. I wish, Mr. Chillingly, that I were your sister, and that you would confide in me. Something troubles you."

"Troubles me—no. My thoughts are happy ones, and they may sometimes perplex me, but they do not trouble." Kenelm said this very softly; and in the warmer light of his musing eyes, the sweeter play of his tranquil smile, there was an expression which did not belie his words.

"You have not told me where you have found a lodging," said Mrs. Braefield, somewhat abruptly.

"Did I not?" replied Kenelm, with an unconscious start, as from an abstracted reverie. "With no undistinguished host, I persume, for when I asked him this morning for the right address of his cottage, in order to direct

such luggage as I have to be sent there, he gave me his card with a grand air, saying, 'I am pretty well known at Moleswich, by and beyond it.' I have not yet looked at his card. Oh, here it is—'Algernon Sidney Gale Jones, Cromwell Lodge'—you laugh. What do you know of him?"

"I wish my husband were here; he would tell you more about him. Mr. Jones is quite a character."

"So I perceive."

"A great radical—very talkative and troublesome at the vestry; but our vicar, Mr. Emlyn, says there is no real harm in him—that his bark is worse than his bite—and that his republican or radical notions must be laid to the door of his godfathers! In addition to his name of Jones, he was unhappily christened Gale; Gale Jones being a noted radical orator at the time of his birth. And I suppose Algernon Sidney was prefixed to Gale in order to devote the new-born more emphatically to republican principles."

"Naturally, therefore, Algernon Sidney Gale Jones baptizes his house Cromwell Lodge, seeing that Algernon Sidney held the Protectorate in especial abhorrence, and that the original Gale Jones, if an honest radical, must have done the same, considering what rough usage the advocates of Parliamentary Reform met with at the hands of his Highness. But we must be indulgent to men who have been unfortunately christened before they had any choice of the names that were to rule their fate. I myself should have been less whimsical had I not been named after a Kenelm who believed in sympathetic powders. Apart from his political doctrines, I like my landlord—he keeps his wife in excellent order. She seems frightened at the sound of her own footsteps, and glides to and fro, a pallid image of submissive womanhood in list slippers."

"Great recommendations certainly, and Cromwell Lodge is very prettily situated. By-the-by, it is very near Mrs. Cameron's."

"Now I think of it, so it is," said Kenelm innocently.

Ah! my friend Kenelm, enemy of shams, and truth-teller *par excellence*, what hast thou come to! How are the mighty fallen! "Since you say you will dine with us, suppose we fix the day after to-morrow, and I will ask Mrs. Cameron and Lily."

"The day after to-morrow—I shall be delighted."

"An early hour?"

"The earlier the better."

"Is six o'clock too early?"

"Too early—certainly not—on the contrary——Good-day—I must now go to Mrs. Somers, she has charge of my portmanteau."

Then Kenelm rose.

"Poor dear Lily!" said Mrs. Braefield; "I wish she were less of a child."

Kenelm reseated himself.

"Is she a child? I don't think she is actually a child."

"Not in years; she is between seventeen and eighteen; but my husband says that she is too childish to talk to, and always tells me to take her off his hands; he would rather talk with Mrs. Cameron."

"Indeed!"

"Still I find something in her."

"Indeed!"

"Not exactly childish, nor quite womanish."

"What then?"

"I can't exactly define. But you know what Mr. Melville and Mrs. Cameron call her as a pet name?"

"No."

"Fairy! Fairies have no age; fairy is neither child nor woman."

"Fairy. She is called Fairy by those who know her best? Fairy!"

"And she believes in fairies."

"Does she?—so do I. Pardon me, I must be off. The day after to-morrow—six o'clock."

"Wait one moment," said Elsie, going to her writing-table. "Since you pass Grassmere on your way home, will you kindly leave this note?"

"I thought Grassmere was a lake in the north?"

"Yes; but Mr. Melville chose to call the cottage by the name of the lake. I think the first picture he ever sold was a view of Wordsworth's house there. Here is my note to ask Mrs. Cameron to meet you; but if you object to be my messenger——"

"Object! my dear Mrs. Braefield. As you say, I pass close by the cottage."

———

CHAPTER IV.

KENELM went with somewhat rapid pace from Mrs. Braefield's to the shop in the High Street, kept by Will Somers. Jessie was behind the counter, which was thronged with customers. Kenelm gave her a brief direction about his portmanteau, and then passed into the back parlor where her husband was employed on his baskets—with the baby's cradle in the corner, and its grandmother rocking it mechanically, as she read a wonderful missionary tract full of tales of miraculous conversions: into what sort of Christians we will not pause to inquire.

"And so you are happy, Will?" said Kenelm, seating himself between the basket-maker and the infant; the dear old mother beside him, reading the tract which linked her dreams of life eternal with life just opening in the cradle that she rocked. He not happy! How he pitied the man who could ask such a question.

"Happy, sir! I should think so, indeed. There is not a night on which Jessie and I, and mother too, do not pray that some day or other you may be as happy. By-and-by the baby will learn to pray 'God bless papa, and mamma, grandmamma, and Mr. Chillingly.'"

"There is some one else much more deserving of prayers than I, though needing them less. You will know some day—pass it by now. To return to the point; you are happy; if I asked why, would not you say, 'Because I have married the girl I love, and have never repented'?"

"Well, sir, that is about it; though, begging your pardon, I think it could be put more prettily somehow."

"You are right there. But perhaps love and happiness never yet found any words that could fitly express them. Good-bye, for the present."

Ah! if it were as mere materialists, or as many middle-aged or elderly folks, who if materialists, are so without knowing it, unreflectingly say, "The main element of happiness is bodily or animal health and strength," that question which Chillingly put would appear a very unmeaning or a very insulting one addressed to a pale cripple, who, however improved of late in health, would still be sickly and ailing all his life,—put, too, by a man of the rarest conformation of physical powers that nature can adapt to physical enjoyment—a man who, since the age in which memory commences, had never known what it was to be unwell, who could scarcely understand you if you talked of a finger-ache, and whom those refinements of mental culture which multiply the delights of the senses had endowed with the most exquisite conceptions of such happiness as mere nature and its instincts can give! But Will did not think the question unmeaning or insulting. He, the poor cripple, felt a vast superiority on the scale of joyous being over the young Hercules, well-born, cultured, and wealthy, who could know so little of happiness as to ask the crippled basket-maker, if he were happy—he, blessed husband and father!

CHAPTER V.

LILY was seated on the grass under a chestnut-tree on the lawn. A white cat, not long emerged from kittenhood, curled itself by her side. On her lap was an open volume, which she was reading with the greatest delight.

Mrs. Cameron came from the house, looked round, perceived the girl, and approached; and either she moved so gently, or Lily was so absorbed in her book, that the latter was not aware of her presence till she felt a light hand on her shoulder, and, looking up, recognized her aunt's gentle face.

"Ah! Fairy, Fairy, that silly book, when you ought to be at your French verbs. What will your guardian say when he comes and finds you have so wasted time?"

"He will say that fairies never waste their time; and he will scold you for saying so." Therewith Lily threw down the book, sprang up to her feet, wound her arm round Mrs. Cameron's neck, and kissed her fondly. "There! is *that* wasting time? I love you so, aunty. In a day like this I think I love everybody and everything!" As she said this, she drew up her lithe form, looked into the blue sky, and with parted lips seemed to drink in air and sunshine. Then she woke up the dozing cat, and began chasing it round the lawn.

Mrs. Cameron stood still, regarding her with moistened eyes. Just at that moment Kenelm entered through the garden gate. He, too, stood still, his eyes fixed on the undulating

movements of Fairy's exquisite form. She had arrested her favorite, and was now at play with it, shaking off her straw hat, and drawing the ribbon attached to it tantalizingly along the smooth grass. Her rich hair thus released and dishevelled by the exercise, fell partly over her face in wavy ringlets; and her musical laugh and words of sportive endearment, sounded on Kenelm's ear more joyously than the trill of the sky-lark, more sweetly than the coo of the ring-dove.

He approached towards Mrs. Cameron. Lily turned suddenly and saw him. Instinctively she smoothed back her loosened tresses, replaced the straw hat, and came up demurely to his side just as he had accosted her aunt.

"Pardon my intrusion, Mrs. Cameron. I am the bearer of this note from Mrs. Braefield." While the aunt read the note, he turned to the niece.

"You promised to show me the picture, Miss Mordaunt."

"But that was a long time ago."

"Too long to expect a lady's promise to be kept?"

Lily seemed to ponder that question, and hesitated before she answered.

"I will show you the picture. I don't think I ever broke a promise yet, but I shall be more careful how I make one in future."

"Why so?"

"Because you did not value mine when I made it, and that hurt me." Lily lifted up her head with a bewitching stateliness, and added gravely, "I was offended."

"Mrs. Braefield is very kind," said Mrs. Cameron; "she asks us to dine the day after to-morrow. You would like to go, Lily?"

"All grown-up people, I suppose? No, thank you, dear aunt. You go alone, I would rather stay at home. May I have little Clemmy to play with? She will bring Juba, and Blanche is very partial to Juba, though she does scratch him."

"Very well, my dear, you shall have your playmate, and I go by myself."

Kenelm stood aghast. "You will not go, Miss Mordaunt; Mrs. Braefield will be so disappointed. And if you don't go, whom shall I have to talk to? I don't like grown-up people better than you do."

"You are going?"

"Certainly."

"And if I go you will talk to me? I am afraid of Mr. Braefield. He is so wise."

"I will save you from him, and will not utter a grain of wisdom."

"Aunty, I will go."

Here Lily made a bound and caught up Blanche, who, taking her kisses resignedly, stared with evident curiosity upon Kenelm.

Here a bell within the house rung the announcement of luncheon. Mrs. Cameron invited Kenelm to partake of that meal. He felt as Romulus might have felt when first invited to taste the ambrosia of the gods. Yet certainly that luncheon was not such as might have pleased Kenelm Chillingly in the early days of The Temperance Hotel. But somehow or other of late he had lost appetite; and on this occasion a very modest share of a very slender dish of chicken fricasseed, and a few cherries daintily arranged on vine leaves, which Lily selected for him, contented him—as probably a very little ambrosia contented Romulus while feasting his eyes on Hebe.

Luncheon over, while Mrs. Cameron wrote her reply to Elsie, Kenelm was conducted by Lily into her own *own* room, in vulgar parlance her *boudoir*, though it did not look as if any one ever *bouder*'d there. It was exquisitely pretty—pretty not as a woman's, but a child's dream of the own own room she would like to have—wondrously neat and cool, and pure-looking! a trellis paper, the trellis gay with roses and woodbine, and birds and butterflies; draperies of muslin, festooned with dainty tassels and ribbons; a dwarf bookcase, that seemed well stored, at least as to bindings; a dainty little writing-table in French *marqueterie*—looking too fresh and spotless to have known hard service. The casement was open, and in keeping with the trellis paper; woodbine and roses from without encroached on the window sides, gently stirred by the faint summer breeze, and wafted sweet odors into the little room. Kenelm went to the window, and glanced on the view beyond. "I was right," he said to himself; "I divined it." But though he spoke in a low inward whisper, Lily, who had watched his movements in surprise, overheard.

"You divined it. Divined what?"

"Nothing, nothing; I was but talking to myself."

"Tell me what you divined—I insist upon

it!" and Fairy petulantly stamped her tiny foot on the floor.

"Do you? Then I obey. I have taken a lodging for a short time on the other side of the brook—Cromwell Lodge—and seeing your house as I passed, I divined that your room was in this part of it. How soft here is the view of the water! Ah! yonder is Izaak Walton's summer-house."

"Don't talk about Izaak Walton, or I shall quarrel with you, as I did with Lion when he wanted me to like that cruel book."

"Who is Lion?"

"Lion—of course, my guardian. I called him Lion when I was a little child. It was on seeing in one of his books a print of a lion playing with a little child."

"Ah! I know the design well," said Kenelm, with a slight sigh. "It is from an antique Greek gem. It is not the lion that plays with the child, it is the child that masters the lion, and the Greeks called the child 'Love.'"

This idea seemed beyond Lily's perfect comprehension. She pused before she answered, with the *naïveté* of a child six years old—

"I see now why I mastered Blanche, who will not make friends with any one else—I love Blanche. Ah, that reminds me—come and look at the picture."

She went to the wall over the writing-table, drew a silk curtain aside from a small painting in a dainty velvet frame-work, and pointing to it, cried with triumph—"Look there! is it not beautiful?"

Kenelm had been prepared to see a landscape, or a group, or anything but what he did see—it was the portrait of Blanche when a kitten.

Little elevated though the subject was, it was treated with graceful fancy. The kitten had evidently ceased from playing with the cotton reel that lay between her paws, and was fixing her gaze intent on a bullfinch that had lighted on a spray within her reach.

"You understand," said Lily, placing her hand on his arm, and drawing him towards what she thought the best light for the picture; "it is Blanche's first sight of a bird. Look well at her face; don't you see a sudden surprise—half joy, half fear? She ceases to play with the reel. Her intellect—or, as Mr. Braefield would say, 'her instinct'—is for the first time aroused. From that moment Blanche was no longer a mere kitten. And it required, oh, the most careful education, to teach her not to kill the poor little birds. She never does now, but I had such trouble with her."

"I cannot say honestly that I do see all that you do in the picture; but it seems to me very simply painted, and was, no doubt, a striking likeness of Blanche at that early age."

"So it was. Lion drew the first sketch from life with his pencil; and when he saw how pleased I was with it—he was so good—he put it on canvas, and let me sit by him while he painted it. Then he took it away, and brought it back finished and framed as you see, last May, a present for my birthday."

"You were born in May—with the flowers."

"The best of all the flowers are born before May—violets."

"But they are born in the shade, and cling to it. Surely, as a child of May, you love the sun!"

"I love the sun—it is never too bright nor too warm for me. But I don't think that, though born in May, I was born in sunlight. I feel more like my own native self when I creep into the shade and sit down alone. I can weep then."

As she thus shyly ended, the character of her whole countenance was changed—its infantine mirthfulness was gone; a grave, thoughtful, even a sad, expression settled on the tender eyes and the tremulous lips.

Kenelm was so touched that words failed him, and there was silence for some moments between the two. At length Kenelm said, slowly—

"You say your own native self. Do you, then, feel, as I often do, that there is a second, possibly a *native*, self, deep hid beneath the self—not merely what we show to the world in common (that may be merely a mask)—but the self that we ordinarily accept even when in solitude as our own; an inner innermost self; oh, so different and so rarely coming forth from its hiding-place; asserting its right of sovereignty, and putting out the other self, as the sun puts out a star?"

Had Kenelm thus spoken to a clever man of the world—to a Chillingly Mivers—to a Chillingly Gordon—they certainly would not have understood him. But to such men he never would have thus spoken. He had a vague

hope that this childlike girl, despite so much of childlike talk, would understand him; and she did at once.

Advancing close to him, again laying her hand on his arm, and looking up towards his bended face with startled wondering eyes, no longer sad, yet not mirthful—

"How true! You have felt that too? Where *is* that innermost self, so deep down—so deep; yet when it does come forth, so much higher—higher—immeasurably higher than one's every day self? It does not tame the butterflies—it longs to get to the stars. And then—and then—ah, how soon it fades back again! You have felt that. Does it not puzzle you?"

"Very much."

"Are there no wise books about it that help to explain?"

"No wise books in my very limited reading even hint at the puzzle. I fancy that it is one of those insoluble questions that rest between the infant and his Maker. Mind and soul are not the same things, and what you and I call 'wise men' are always confounding the two——"

Fortunately for all parties—especially the reader; for Kenelm had here got on the back of one of his most cherished hobbies—the distinction between psychology and metaphysics—soul and mind scientifically or logically considered—Mrs. Cameron here entered the room and asked him how he liked the picture.

"Very much. I am no great judge of the art. But it pleased me at once, and now that Miss Mordaunt has interpreted the intention of the painter, I admire it yet more."

"Lily chooses to interpret his intention in her own way, and insists that Blanche's expression of countenance conveys an idea of her capacity to restrain her destructive instinct, and be taught to believe that it is wrong to kill birds for mere sport. For food she need not kill them, seing that Lily takes care that she has plenty to eat. But I don't think that Mr. Melville had the slightest suspicion that he had indicated that capacity in his picture."

"He must have done so, whether he suspected it or not," said Lily, positively; "otherwise he would not be truthful."

"Why not truthful?" asked Kenelm.

"Don't you see? If you were called upon to describe truthfully the character of any little child, would you only speak of such naughty impulses as all children have in common, and not even hint at the capacity to be made better?"

"Admirably put!" said Kenelm. "There is no doubt that a much fiercer animal than a cat—a tiger, for instance, or a conquering hero—may be taught to live on the kindest possible terms with the creatures on which it was its natural instinct to prey."

"Yes—yes; hear that, aunty! You remember the Happy Family that we saw, eight years ago, at Moleswich fair, with a cat not half so nice as Blanche allowing a mouse to bite her ear? Well, then, would Lion not have been shamefully false to Blanche if Lion had not——"

Lily paused and looked half-shyly, half-archly, at Kenelm, then added, in slow, deep-drawn tones—"given a glimpse of her innermost self?"

"Innermost self!" repeated Mrs. Cameron, perplexed and laughing gently.

Lily stole nearer to Kenelm and whispered—

"Is not one's innermost self one's best self?"

Kenelm smiled approvingly. The fairy was rapidly deepening her spell upon him. If Lily had been his sister, his betrothed, his wife, how fondly he would have kissed her! She had expressed a thought over which he had often inaudibly brooded, and she had clothed it with all the charm of her own infantine fancy and womanlike tenderness! Goethe has said somewhere, or is reported to have said, "There is something in every man's heart, that, if you knew it, would make you hate him." What Goethe said, still more what Goethe is reported to have said, is never to be taken quite literally. No comprehensive genius—genius at once poet and thinker—ever can be so taken. The sun shines on a dunghill. But the sun has no predilection for a dunghill. It only comprehends a dunghill as it does a rose. Still Kenelm had always regarded that loose ray from Goethe's prodigal orb with an abhorrence most unphilosophical for a philosopher so young as generally to take upon oath any words of so great a master. Kenelm thought that the root of all private benevolence, of all enlightened advance in social reform, lay in the adverse theorem—that in every man's nature there lies a something that, could we

get at it, cleanse it, polish it, render it visibly clear to our eyes, would make us love him. And in this spontaneous, uncultured sympathy with the results of so many laborious struggles of his own scholastic intellect against the dogma of the German giant, he felt as if he had found a younger—true, but oh, how much more subduing, because so much younger—sister of his own man's soul. Then came, so strongly, the sense of her sympathy with his own strange innermost self which a man will never feel more than once in his life with a daughter of Eve, that he dared not trust himself to speak. He somewhat hurried his leave-taking.

Passing in the rear of the garden towards the bridge which led to his lodging, he found on the opposite bank, at the other end of the bridge, Mr. Algernon Sidney Gale Jones peacefully angling for trout.

"Will you not try the stream to-day, sir? Take my rod."

Kenelm remembered that Lily had called Izaak Walton's book "a cruel one," and shaking his head gently, went his way into the house. There he seated himself silently by the window, and looked towards the grassy lawn and the dipping willows, and the gleam of the white walls through the girdling trees, as he had looked the eve before.

"Ah!" he murmured at last, "if, as I hold, a man but tolerably good does good unconsciously merely by the act of living—if he can no more traverse his way from the cradle to the grave, without letting fall, as he passes, the germs of strength, fertility, and beauty, than can a reckless wind or a vagrant bird, which, where it passes, leaves behind it the oak, the cornsheaf, or the flower—ah, if that be so, how tenfold the good must be, if the man find the gentler and purer duplicate of his own being in that mysterious, undefinable union which Shakespeares and day-laborers equally agree to call love; which Newton never recognizes, and Decartes (his only rival in the realms of thought at once severe and imaginative) reduces into links of early association, explaining that he loved women who squinted because, when he was a boy, a girl with that infirmity squinted at him from the other side of his father's garden-wall! Ah! be this union between man and woman what it may; if it be really love—really the bond which embraces the innermost and bettermost self of both—how, daily, hourly, momently, should we bless God for having made it so easy to be happy and to be good!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE dinner-party at Mr. Braefield's was not quite so small as Kenelm had anticipated. When the merchant heard from his wife that Kenelm was coming, he thought it would be but civil to the young gentleman to invite a few other persons to meet him.

"You see, my dear," he said to Elsie, "Mrs. Cameron is a very good, simple sort of woman, but not particularly amusing; and Lily, though a pretty girl, is so exceedingly childish. We owe much, my sweet Elsie, to this Mr. Chillingly"—here there was a deep tone of feeling in his voice and look—"and we must make it as pleasant for him as we can. I will bring down my friend Sir Thomas, and you ask Mr. Emlyn and his wife. Sir Thomas is a very sensible man, and Emlyn a very learned one. So Mr. Chillingly will find people worth talking to. By-the-by, when I go to town I will send down a haunch of venison from Groves'."

So when Kenelm arrived, a little before six o'clock, he found in the drawing-room the Rev. Charles Emlyn, vicar of Moleswich proper, with his spouse, and a portly middle-aged man, to whom, as Sir Thomas Pratt, Kenelm was introduced. Sir Thomas was an eminent city banker. The ceremonies of introduction over, Kenelm stole to Elsie's side.

"I thought I was to meet Mrs. Cameron. I don't see her."

"She will be here presently. It looks as if it might rain, and I have sent the carriage for her and Lily. Ah, here they are!"

Mrs. Cameron entered, clothed in black silk. She always wore black; and behind her came Lily, in the spotless color that became her name; no ornament, save a slender gold chain to which was appended a simple locket, and a single blush rose in her hair. She looked wonderfully lovely; and with that loveliness there was a certain nameless air of distinction, possibly owing to delicacy of form and coloring; possibly to a certain grace of carriage, which was not without a something of pride.

Mr. Braefield, who was a very punctual man, made a sign to his servant, and in another moment or so dinner was announced. Sir Thomas, of course, took in the hostess; Mr. Braefield, the vicar's wife (she was a dean's daughter); Kenelm, Mrs. Cameron; and the vicar, Lily.

On seating themselves at the table Kenelm was on the left-hand, next to the hostess, and separated from Lily by Mrs. Cameron and Mr. Emlyn; and when the vicar had said grace, Lily glanced behind his back and her aunt's at Kenelm (who did the same thing) making at him what the French call a *moue*. The pledge to her had been broken. She was between two men very much grown up—the vicar and the host. Kenelm returned the *moue* with a mournful smile and an involuntary shrug.

All were silent till, after his soup and his first glass of sherry, Sir Thomas began—

"I think, Mr. Chillingly, we have met before, though I had not the honor then of making your acquaintance." Sir Thomas paused before he added, "Not long ago; the last State ball at Buckingham Palace."

Kenelm bent his head acquiescingly. He had been at that ball.

"You were talking with a very charming woman—a friend of mine—Lady Glenalvon."

(Sir Thomas was Lady Glenalvon's banker.)

"I remember perfectly," said Kenelm. "We were seated in the picture gallery. You came to speak to Lady Glenalvon, and I yielded to you my place on the settee."

"Quite true; and I think you joined a young lady—very handsome—the great heiress, Miss Travers."

Kenelm again bowed, and turning away as politely as he could, addressed himself to Mrs. Cameron. Sir Thomas, satisfied that he had impressed on his audience the facts of his friendship with Lady Glenalvon and his attendance at the court-ball, now directed his conversational powers towards the vicar, who, utterly foiled in the attempt to draw out Lily, met the baronet's advances with the ardor of a talker too long suppressed. Kenelm continued, unmolested, to ripen his acquaintance with Mrs. Cameron. She did not, however, seem to lend a very attentive ear to his preliminary commonplace remarks about scenery or weather, but at his first pause, said,

"Sir Thomas spoke about a Miss Travers: is she related to a gentleman who was once in the Guards—Leopold Travers?"

"She is his daughter. Did you ever know Leopold Travers?"

"I have heard him mentioned by friends of mine long ago—long ago," replied Mrs. Cameron with a sort of weary languor, not unwonted, in her voice and manner; and then, as if dismissing the bygone reminiscence from her thoughts, changed the subject.

"Lily tells me, Mr. Chillingly, that you said you were staying at Mr. Jones's, Cromwell Lodge. I hope you are made comfortable there."

"Very. The situation is singularly pleasant."

"Yes, it is considered the prettiest spot on the brookside, and used to be a favorite resort for anglers; but the trout, I believe, are growing scarce; at least, now that the fishing in the Thames is improved, poor Mr. Jones complains that his old lodgers desert him. Of course you took the rooms for the sake of the fishing. I hope the sport may be better than it is said to be."

"It is of little consequence to me; I do not care much about fishing; and since Miss Mordaunt calls the book which first enticed me to take to it 'a cruel one,' I feel as if the trout had become as sacred as crocodiles were to the ancient Egyptians."

"Lily is a foolish child on such matters. She cannot bear the thought of giving pain to any dumb creature; and just before our garden there are a few trout which she has tamed. They feed out of her hand; she is always afraid they will wander away and get caught."

"But Mr. Melville is an angler?"

"Several years ago he would sometimes pretend to fish, but I believe it was rather an excuse for lying on the grass and reading 'the cruel book,' or perhaps, rather, for sketching. But now he is seldom here till autumn, when it grows too cold for such amusement."

Here Sir Thomas's voice was so loudly raised that it stopped the conversation between Kenelm and Mrs. Cameron. He had got into some question of politics on which he and the vicar did not agree, and the discussion threatened to become warm, when Mrs. Braefield, with a woman's true tact, broached a new topic, in which Sir Thomas was immediately inter-

ested, relating to the construction of a conservatory for orchids that he meditated adding to his country-house, and in which frequent appeal was made to Mrs. Cameron, who was considered an accomplished florist, and who seemed at some time or other in her life to have acquired a very intimate acquaintance with the costly family of orchids.

When the ladies retired Kenelm found himself seated next to Mr. Emlyn, who astounded him by a complimentary quotation from one of his own Latin prize poems at the university, hoped he would make some stay at Moleswich, told him of the principal places in the neighborhood worth visiting, and offered him the run of his library, which he flattered himself was rather rich, both in the best editions of Greek and Latin classics and in early English literature. Kenelm was much pleased with the scholarly vicar, especially when Mr. Emlyn began to speak about Mrs. Cameron and Lily. Of the first he said, "She is one of those women in whom Quiet is so predominant that it is long before one can know what undercurrents of good feeling flow beneath the unruffled surface. I wish, however, she was a little more active in the management and education of her niece—a girl in whom I feel a very anxieus interest, and whom I doubt if Mrs. Cameron understands. Perhaps, however, only a poet, and a very peculiar sort of poet, can understand her: Lily Mordaunt is herself a poem."

"I like your definition of her," said Kenelm. "There is certainly something about her which differs much from the prose of common life."

"You probably know Wordsworth's lines:

> '. . . and she shall lean her ear
> In many a secret place
> Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
> And beauty, born of murmuring sound,
> Shall pass into her face.'

They are lines that many critics have found unintelligible; but Lily seems like the living key to them."

Kenelm's dark face lighted up, but he made no answer.

"Only," continued Mr. Emlyn, "how a girl of that sort, left wholly to herself, untrained, undisciplined, is to grow up into the practical uses of womanhood, is a question that perplexes and saddens me."

"Any more wine?" asked the host, closing a conversation on commercial matter with Sir Thomas. "No?—shall we join the ladies?"

CHAPTER VII.

THE drawing-room was deserted; the ladies were in the garden. As Kenelm and Mr. Emlyn walked side by side towards the group (Sir Thomas and Mr. Braefield following at a little distance), the former asked, somewhat abruptly, "What sort of man is Miss Cameron's guardian, Mr. Melville?"

"I can scarcely answer that question. I see little of him when he comes here. Formerly, be used to run down pretty often with a harum-scarum set of young fellows, quartered at Cromwell Lodge—Grasmere had no accommodation for them—students in the Academy, I suppose. For some years he has not brought those persons, and when he does come himself it is but for a few days. He has the reputation of being very wild."

Further conversation was here stopped. The two men, while they thus talked, had been diverging from the straight way across the lawn towards the ladies, turning into sequestered paths through the shrubbery; now they emerged into the open sward, just before a table, on which coffee was served, and round which all the rest of the party were gathered.

"I hope, Mr. Emlyn," said Elsie's cheery voice, "that you have dissuaded Mr. Chillingly from turning Papist. I am sure you have taken time enough to do so."

Mr. Emlyn, Protestant every inch of him, slightly recoiled from Kenelm's side. "Do you meditate turning——" He could not conclude the sentence.

"Be not alarmed, my dear sir. I did but own to Mrs. Braefield that I had paid a visit to Oxford in order to confer with a learned man on a question that puzzled me, and as abstract as that feminine pastime, theology, is nowadays. I cannot convince Mrs. Braefield that Oxford admits other puzzles in life than those which amuse the ladies." Here Kenelm dropped into a chair by the side of Lily.

Lily half-turned her back to him.

"Have I offended again?"

Lily shrugged her shoulders slightly and would not answer.

"I suspect, Miss Mordaunt, that among your good qualities, nature has omitted one; the bettermost self within you should replace it."

Lily here abruptly turned to him her front face—the light of the skies was becoming dim, but the evening star shone upon it.

"How! what do you mean?"

"Am I to answer politely or truthfully?"

"Truthfully! Oh, truthfully! What is life without truth?"

"Even though one believes in fairies?"

"Fairies are truthful, in a certain way. But you are not truthful. You were not thinking of fairies when you——"

"When I what?"

"Found fault with me!"

"I am not sure of that. But I will translate to you my thoughts, so far as I can read them myself, and to do so I will resort to the fairies. Let us suppose that a fairy has placed her changeling into the cradle of a mortal; that into the cradle she drops all manner of fairy gifts, which are not bestowed on mere mortals; but that one mortal attribute she forgets. The changeling grows up, she charms those around her; they humor, and pet, and spoil her. But there arises a moment in which the omission of the one mortal gift is felt by her admirers and friends. Guess what that is."

Lily pondered. "I see what you mean; the reverse of truthfulness, politeness."

"No, not exactly that, though politeness slides into it unawares; it is a very humble quality, a very unpoetic quality; a quality that many dull people possess; and yet without it no fairy can fascinate mortals, when on the face of the fairy settles the first wrinkle. Can you not guess it now?"

"No; you vex me, you provoke me;" and Lily stamped her foot petulantly, as in Kenelm's presence she had stamped it once before. "Speak plainly, I insist."

"Miss Mordaunt, excuse me, I dare not," said Kenelm, rising with a sort of bow one makes to the Queen; and he crossed over to Mrs. Braefield.

Lily remained, still pouting fiercely.

Sir Thomas took the chair Kenelm had vacated.

CHAPTER VIII.

The hour for parting came. Of all the guests, Sir Thomas alone stayed at the house a guest for the night. Mr. and Mrs. Emlyn had their own carriage. Mrs. Braefield's carriage came to the door for Mrs. Cameron and Lily.

Said Lily, impatiently and discourteously, "Who would not rather walk on such a night?" and she whispered to her aunt.

Mrs. Cameron, listening to the whisper, and obedient to every whim of Lily's, said, "You are too considerate, dear Mrs. Braefield, Lily prefers walking home; there is no chance of rain now."

Kenelm followed the steps of the aunt and niece, and soon overtook them on the brookside.

"A charming night, Mr. Chillingly," said Mrs. Cameron.

"An English summer night; nothing like it in such parts of the world as I have visited. But, alas! of English summer nights there are but few."

"You have travelled much abroad?"

"Much—no, a little; chiefly on foot."

Lily hitherto had not said a word, and had been walking with downcast head. Now she looked up and said, in the mildest and most conciliatory of human voices—

"You have been abroad;" then, with an acquiescence in the manners of the world which to him she had never yet manifested, she added his name, "Mr. Chillingly" and went on, more familiarly. "What a breadth of meaning the word 'abroad' conveys! Away, afar from one's self, from one's everyday life. How I envy you! you have been abroad: so has Lion"—(Here drawing herself up)—"I mean my guardian, Mr. Melville."

"Certainly, I have been abroad; but afar from myself—never. It is an old saying—all old sayings are true, most new sayings are false—a man carries his native soil at the sole of his foot."

Here the path somewhat narrowed. Mrs. Cameron went on first, Kenelm and Lily behind; she, of course, on the dry path, he on the dewy grass.

She stopped him. "You are walking in the wet, and with those thin shoes." Lily moved instinctively away from the dry path.

Homely though that speech of Lily's be, and absurd as said by a fragile girl to a gladiator like Kenelm, it lit up a whole world of womanhood—it showed all that undiscoverable land which was hidden to the learned Mr. Emlyn, all that land which an uncomprehended girl seizes and reigns over when she becomes wife and mother.

At that homely speech, and that impulsive movement, Kenelm halted, in a sort of dreaming maze. He turned timidly—"Can you forgive me for my rude words? I presumed to find fault with you."

"And so justly. I have been thinking over all you said, and I feel you were so right; only I still do not quite understand what you meant by the quality for mortals which the fairy did not give to her changeling."

"If I did not dare say it before, I should still less dare to say it now."

"Do." There was no longer the stamp of the foot, no longer the flash from her eyes, no longer the wilfulness which said "I insist;"—"Do," soothingly, sweetly, imploringly.

Thus pushed to it, Kenelm plucked up courage, and not trusting himself to look at Lily, answered brusquely—

"The quality desirable for men, but more essential to women in proportion as they are fairy-like, though the tritest thing possible, is good temper."

Lily made a sudden bound from his side, and joined her aunt, walking through the wet grass.

When they reached the garden-gate Kenelm advanced and opened it. Lily passed him by haughtily; they gained the cottage-door.

"I don't ask you in at this hour," said Mrs. Cameron. "It would be but a false compliment."

Kenelm bowed and retreated. Lily left her aunt's side, and came towards him, extending her hand.

"I shall consider your words, Mr. Chillingly," she said, with a strangely majestic air. "At present I think you are not right. I am not ill-tempered; but——" here she paused, and then added with a loftiness of mien which, had she not been so exquisitely pretty, would have been rudeness—"in any case I forgive you."

———

CHAPTER IX.

There were a good many pretty villas in the outskirts of Moleswich, and the owners of them were generally well off, and yet there was little of what is called visiting society—owing, perhaps, to the fact that there not being among these proprietors any persons belonging to what is commonly called "the aristocratic class," there was a vast deal of aristocratic pretension. The family of Mr. A——, who had enriched himself as a stock-jobber, turned up its nose at the family of Mr. B——, who had enriched himself still more as a linen draper, while the family of Mr. B—— showed a very cold shoulder to the family of Mr. C——, who had become richer than either of them as a pawnbroker, and whose wife wore diamonds, but dropped her h's. England would be a community so aristocratic that there would be no living in it, if one could exterminate what is now called "aristocracy." The Braefields were the only persons who really drew together the antagonistic atoms of the Moleswich society, partly because they were acknowledged to be the first persons there, in right not only of old settlement (the Braefields had held Braefieldville for four generations), but of the wealth derived from those departments of commercial enterprise which are recognized as the highest, and of an establishment considered to be the most elegant in the neighborhood; principally because Elsie, while exceedingly genial and cheerful in temper, had a certain power of will (as her runaway folly had manifested), and when she got people together compelled them to be civil to each other. She had commenced this gracious career by inaugurating children's parties, and when the children became friends the parents necessarily grew closer together. Still her task had only recently begun, and its effects were not in full operation. Thus, though it became known at Moleswich that a young gentleman, the heir to a baronetcy and a high estate, was sojourning at Cromwell Lodge, no overtures were made to him on the part of the A's, B's, and C's. The vicar, who called on Kenelm the day after the dinner at Braefieldville, explained to him the social conditions of the place. "You understand," said he, "that it will be from no want of courtesy on the part of my neighbors if they do not offer you any relief from the pleasures of soli-

tude. It will be simply because they are shy, not because they are uncivil. And it is this consideration that makes me, at the risk of seeming too forward, entreat you to look into the vicarage any morning or evening on which you feel tired of your own company—suppose you drink tea with us this evening—you will find a young lady whose heart you have already won."

"Whose heart I have won!" faltered Kenelm, and the warm blood rushed to his cheek.

"But," continued the vicar, smiling, "she has no matrimonial designs on you at present. She is only twelve years old—my little girl Clemmy."

"Clemmy!—she is your daughter. I did not know that. I very gratefully accept your invitation."

"I must not keep you longer from your amusement. The sky is just clouded enough for sport. What fly do you use?"

"To say truth, I doubt if the stream has much to tempt me in the way of its trout, and I prefer rambling about the lanes and by-paths to

'The noiseless angler's solitary stand.'

I am an indefatigable walker, and the home scenery round the place has many charms for me. Besides," added Kenelm, feeling conscious that he ought to find some more plausible excuse than the charms of home scenery for locating himself long in Cromwell Lodge—"besides—I intend to devote myself a good deal to reading. I have been very idle of late, and the solitude of this place must be favorable to study."

"You are not intended, I presume, for any of the learned professions?"

"The learned professions," replied Kenelm, "is an invidious form of speech that we are doing our best to eradicate from the language. All professions nowadays are to have much about the same amount of learning. The learning of the military profession is to be levelled upwards—the learning of the scholastic to be levelled downwards. Cabinet ministers sneer at the uses of Greek and Latin. And even such masculine studies as Law and Medicine are to be adapted to the measurements of taste and propriety in colleges for young ladies. No, I am not intended for any profession; but still an ignorant man like myself may not be the worse for a little book-reading now and then."

"You seem to be badly provided with books here," said the vicar, glancing round the room, in which, on a table in the corner, lay half-a-dozen old-looking volumes, evidently belonging not to the lodger but the landlord. "But, as I before said, my library is at your service. What branch of reading do you prefer?"

Kenelm was, and looked, puzzled. But after a pause he answered:

"The more remote it be from the present day, the better for me. You said your collection was rich in medieval literature. But the Middle Ages are so copied by the modern Goths, that I might as well read translations of Chaucer, or take lodgings in Wardour Street. If you have any books about the manners and habits of those who, according to the newest idea in science, were our semi-human progenitors in the transition state between a marine animal and a gorilla, I should be very much edified by the loan."

"Alas," said Mr. Emlyn, laughing, "no such books have been left to us."

"No such books? You must be mistaken. There must be plenty of them somewhere. I grant all the wonderful powers of invention bestowed on the creators of poetic romance; still not the sovereign masters in that realm of literature—not Scott, not Cervantes, not Goethe, not even Shakespeare—could have presumed to rebuild the past without such materials as they found in the books that record it. And though I, no less cheerfully, grant that we have now living among us a creator of poetic romance immeasurably more inventive than they—appealing to our credulity in portents the most monstrous, with a charm of style the most conversationally familiar—still I cannot conceive that even that unrivalled romance-writer can so bewitch our understandings as to make us believe, that, if Miss Mordaunt's cat dislikes to wet her feet, it is probably because in the prehistoric age her ancestors lived in the dry country of Egypt; or that when some lofty orator, a Pitt or a Gladstone, rebuts with a polished smile which reveals his canine teeth the rude assault of an opponent, he betrays his descent from a 'semi-human progenitor' who was accustomed to snap at his enemy. Surely—surely there must be some books still extant written by philosophers before the birth

of Adam, in which there is authority, even though but in mythic fable, for such poetic inventions. Surely—surely some early chroniclers must depose that they saw, saw with their own eyes, the great gorillas who scratched off their hairy coverings to please the eyes of the young ladies of their species, and that they noted the gradual metamorphosis of one animal into another. For, if you tell me that this illustrious romance-writer is but a cautious man of science, and that we must accept his inventions according to the sober laws of evidence and fact, there is not the most incredible ghost story which does not better satisfy the common-sense of a sceptic. However, if you have no such books, lend me the most unphilosophical you possess—on magic, for instance—the philosopher's stone——"

"I have some of them," said the vicar laughing, "you shall choose for yourself."

"If you are going homeward, let me accompany you part of the way—I don't yet know where the church and the vicarage are, and I ought to know before I come in the evening."

Kenelm and the vicar walked side by side, very sociably, across the bridge, and on the side of the rivulet on which stood Mrs. Cameron's cottage. As they skirted the garden pale at the rear of the cottage, Kenelm suddenly stopped in the middle of some sentence which had interested Mr. Emlyn, and as suddenly arrested his steps on the turf that bordered the lane. A little before him stood an old peasant woman, with whom Lily, on the opposite side of the garden pale, was conversing. Mr. Emlyn did not at first see what Kenelm saw; turning round rather to gaze on his companion, surprised by his abrupt halt and silence. The girl put a small basket into the old woman's hand, who then dropped a low curtsey, and uttered low a "God bless you." Low though it was, Kenelm overheard it, and said abstractedly to Mr. Emlyn, "Is there a greater link betweeen this life and the next than God's blessing on the young, breathed from the lips of the old?"

CHAPTER X.

"And how is your good man, Mrs. Haley?" said the vicar, who had now reached the spot on which the old woman stood—with Lily's fair face still bended down to her—while Kenelm slowly followed him.

"Thank you kindly, sir, he is better—out of his bed now. The young lady has done him a power of good——"

"Hush!" said Lily, coloring. "Make haste home now; you must not keep him waiting for his dinner."

The old woman again curtseyed, and went off at a brisk pace.

"Do you know, Mr. Chillingly," said Mr. Emlyn, "that Miss Mordaunt is the best doctor in the place? Though if she goes on making so many cures she will find the number of her patients rather burthensome."

"It was only the other day," said Lily, "that you scolded me for the best cure I have yet made."

"I?—Oh! I remember; you led that silly child Madge to believe that there was a fairy charm in the arrow-root you sent her. Own you deserved a scolding there."

"No, I did not. I dress the arrow-root, and am I not Fairy? I have just got such a pretty note from Clemmy, Mr. Emlyn, asking me to come up this evening and see her new magic-lantern. Will you tell her to expect me? And —mind—no scolding."

"And all magic?" said Mr. Emlyn; "be it so."

Lily and Kenelm had not hitherto exchanged a word. She had replied with a grave inclination of her head to his silent bow. But now she turned to him shyly and said, "I suppose you have been fishing all the morning?"

"No; the fishes hereabout are under the protection of a Fairy—whom I dare not displease."

Lily's face brightened, and she extended her hand to him over the palings. "Good day; I hear aunty's voice—those dreadful French verbs!"

She disappeared among the shrubs, amid which they heard the trill of her fresh young voice singing to herself.

"That child has a heart of gold," said Mr. Emlyn, as the two men walked on. "I did not exaggerate when I said she was the best doctor in the place. I believe the poor really do believe that she is a Fairy. Of course we send from the vicarage to our ailing parishioners who require it food and wine; but it

never seems to do them the good that her little dishes made by her own hands do; and I don't know if you noticed the basket that old woman took away—Miss Lily taught Will Somers to make the prettiest little baskets; and she puts her jellies or other savories into dainty porcelain gallipots nicely fitting into the baskets, which she trims with ribbons. It is the look of the thing that tempts the appetite of the invalids, and certainly the child may well be called Fairy at present; but I wish Mrs. Cameron would attend a little more strictly to her education. She can't be a Fairy for ever."

Kenelm sighed, but made no answer.

Mr. Emlyn then turned the conversation to erudite subjects, and so they came in sight of the town, when the vicar stopped and pointed towards the church, of which the spire rose a little to the left, with two aged yew-trees half-shadowing the burial-ground, and in the rear a glimpse of the vicarage seen amid the shrubs of its garden ground.

"You will know your way now," said the vicar; "excuse me if I quit you, I have a few visits to make; among others, to poor Haley, husband to the old woman you saw. I read to him a chapter in the Bible every day; yet still I fancy that he believes in fairy charms."

"Better believe too much, than too little," said Kenelm; and he turned aside into the village, and spent half-an-hour with Will, looking at the pretty baskets Lily had taught Will to make. Then, as he went slowly homeward, he turned aside into the churchyard.

The church, built in the thirteenth century, was not large, but it probably sufficed for its congregation, since it betrayed no signs of modern addition; restoration or repair it needed not. The centuries had but mellowed the tints of its solid walls, as little injured by the huge ivy stems that shot forth their aspiring leaves to the very summit of the stately tower, as by the slender roses which had been trained to climb up a foot or so of the massive buttresses. The site of the burial-ground was unusually picturesque: sheltered towards the north by a rising ground clothed with woods, sloping down at the south towards the glebe pasture-grounds through which ran the brooklet, sufficiently near for its brawling gurgle to be heard on a still day. Kenelm sat himself on an antique tomb, which was evidently appropriated to some one of higher than common rank in bygone days, but on which the sculpture was wholly obliterated.

The stillness and solitude of the place had their charm for his meditative temperament; and he remained there long, forgetful of time, and scarcely hearing the boom of the clock that warned him of its lapse.

When suddenly, a shadow—the shadow of a human form—fell on the grass on which his eyes dreamily rested. He looked up with a start, and beheld Lily standing before him mute and still. Her image was so present in his thoughts at the moment that he felt a thrill of awe, as if the thoughts had conjured up her apparition. She was the first to speak.

"You here, too?" she said very softly, almost whisperingly.

"Too!" echoed Kenelm, rising; "too! 'Tis no wonder that I, a stranger to the place, should find my steps attracted towards its most venerable building. Even the most careless traveller, halting at some remote abodes of the living, turns aside to gaze on the burial-ground of the dead. But my surprise is that you, Miss Mordaunt, should be attracted towards the same spot."

"It is my favorite spot," said Lily, "and always has been. I have sat many an hour on that tombstone. It is strange to think that no one knows who sleeps beneath it. The 'Guide Book to Moleswich,' though it gives the history of the church from the reign in which it was first built, can only venture a guess that this tomb, the grandest and oldest in the burial-ground, is tenanted by some member of a family named Montfichet, that was once very powerful in the county, and has become extinct since the reign of Henry VI. But," added Lily, "there is not a letter of the name Montfichet left. I found out more than any one else has done—I learned black-letter on purpose; look here," and she pointed to a small spot in which the moss had been removed. "Do you see those figures, are they not XVIII? and look again, in what was once the line above the figures, ELE. It must have been an Eleanor, who died at the age of eighteen——"

"I rather think it more probable that the figures refer to the date of the death, 1318 perhaps; and so far as I can decipher black-letter, which is more in my father's line than mine, I think it is A L, not E L, and that it seems as if

there had been a letter between L and the second E, which is now effaced. The tomb itself is not likely to belong to any powerful family then resident at the place. Their monuments, according to usage, would have been within the church; probably in their own mortuary chapel."

"Don't try to destroy my fancy," said Lily, shaking her head; "you cannot succeed, I know *her* history too well. She was young, and some one loved her, and built over her the finest tomb he could afford; and see how long the epitaph must have been! how much it must have spoken in her praise, and of his grief. And then he went his way, and the tomb was neglected, and her fate forgotten."

"My dear Miss Mordaunt, this is indeed a wild romance to spin out of so slender a thread. But even if true, there is no reason to think that a life is forgotten though a tomb be neglected."

"Perhaps not," said Lily, thoughtfully. "But when I am dead, if I can look down, I think it would please me to see my grave not neglected by those who had loved me once."

She moved from him as she said this, and went to a little mound that seemed not long since raised; there was a simple cross at the head and a narrow border of flowers round it. Lily knelt beside the flowers and pulled out a stray weed. Then she rose, and said to Kenelm, who had followed, and now stood beside her—

"She was the little grandchild of poor old Mrs. Hales. I could not cure her, though I tried hard: she was so fond of me, and died in my arms. No, let me not say 'died'—surely there is no such thing as dying. 'Tis but a change of life—

> 'Less than the void between two waves of air,
> The space between existence and a soul.'"

"Whose lines are those?" asked Kenelm.

"I don't know; I learnt them from Lion. Don't you believe them to be true?"

"Yes! But the truth does not render the thought of quitting this scene of life for another more pleasing to most of us. See how soft and gentle and bright is all that living summer land beyond; let us find subject for talk from that, not from the graveyard on which we stand."

"But is there not a summer land fairer than that we see now; and which we do see, as in a dream, best when we take subjects of talk from the graveyard?" Without waiting for a reply, Lily went on: "I planted these flowers; Mr. Emlyn was angry with me; he said it was 'Popish.' But he had not the heart to have them taken up; I come here very often to see to them. Do you think it wrong? Poor little Nell! she was so fond of flowers. And the Eleanor in the great tomb, she too perhaps knew some one who called her Nell; but there are no flowers round her tomb. Poor Eleanor!"

She took the nosegay she wore on her bosom, and as she repassed the tomb laid it on the mouldering stone.

CHAPTER XI.

THEY quitted the burial-ground, taking their way to Grasmere. Kenelm walked by Lily's side; not a word passed between them till they came in sight of the cottage.

Then Lily stopped abruptly, and lifting towards him her charming face, said—

"I told you I would think over what you said to me last night. I have done so, and feel I can thank you honestly. You were very kind; I never before thought that I had a bad temper, no one ever told me so. But I see now what you mean—sometimes I feel very quickly, and then I show it. But how did I show it to you, Mr. Chillingly?"

"Did you not turn your back to me when I seated myself next you in Mrs. Braefield's garden, vouchsafing me no reply when I asked if I had offended?"

Lily's face became bathed in blushes, and her voice faltered, as she answered—

"I was not offended, I was not in a bad temper then; it was worse than that."

"Worse—what could it possibly be?"

"I am afraid it was envy."

"Envy of what—of whom?"

"I don't know how to explain; after all, I fear aunty is right, and the fairy tales put very silly, very naughty thoughts into one's head. When Cinderella's sisters went to the king's ball, and Cinderella was left alone, did not she long to go too? Did not she envy her sisters?"

"Ah! I understand now—Sir Charles spoke of the Court Ball."

"And you were there talking with handsome ladies—and—oh! I was so foolish and felt sore."

"You, who when we first met wondered how people who could live in the country preferred to live in towns, do then sometimes contradict yourself, and sigh for the great world that lies beyond these quiet water banks. You feel that you have youth and beauty, and wish to be admired!"

"It is not that exactly," said Lily, with a perplexed look in her ingenuous countenance, "and in my better moments, when the 'bettermost self' comes forth, I know that I am not made for the great world you speak of. But you see——" Here she paused again, and as they had now entered the garden, dropped wearily on a bench beside the path. Kenelm seated himself there too, waiting for her to finish her broken sentence.

"You see," she continued, looking down embarrassed, and describing vague circles on the gravel with her fairy-like foot, "that at home, ever since I can remember, they have treated me as if,—well, as if I were—what shall I say?—the child of one of your great ladies. Even Lion, who is so noble, so grand, seemed to think when I was a mere infant that I was a little queen; once when I told a fib he did not scold me, but I never saw him look so sad and so angry as when he said, 'Never again forget that you are a lady.' And, but I tire you——"

"Tire me, indeed! go on."

"No, I have said enough to explain why I have at times proud thoughts, and vain thoughts; and why, for instance, I said to myself: 'Perhaps my place of right is among those fine ladies whom he'—but it is all over now." She rose hastily with a pretty laugh, and bounded towards Mrs. Cameron, who was walking slowly along the lawn with a book in her hand.

CHAPTER XII.

It was a very merry party at the vicarage that evening. Lily had not been prepared to meet Kenelm there, and her face brightened wonderfully as at her entrance he turned from the bookshelves to which Mr. Emlyn was directing his attention. But instead of meeting his advance, she darted off to the lawn, where Clemmy and several other children greeted her with a joyous shout.

"Not acquainted with Macleane's 'Juvenal'?" said the reverend scholar; "you will be greatly pleased with it—here it is—a posthumous work, edited by George Long. I can lend you Munro's Lucretius, '69. Ah! we have some scholars yet to pit against the Germans."

"I am heartily glad to hear it," said Kenelm. "It will be a long time before they will ever wish to rival us in that game which Miss Clemmy is now forming on the lawn, and in which England has recently acquired a European reputation."

"I don't take you. What game?"

"Puss in the Corner. With your leave I will look out and see whether it be a winning game for puss—in the long-run." Kenelm joined the children, amidst whom Lily seemed not the least childlike. Resisting all overtures from Clemmy to join in their play, he seated himself on a sloping bank at a little distance—an idle looker-on. His eye followed Lily's nimble movements, his ear drank in the music of her joyous laugh. Could that be the same girl whom he had seen tending the flower bed amid the gravestones? Mrs. Emlyn came across the lawn and joined him, seating herself also on the bank. Mrs. Emlyn was an exceedingly clever woman; nevertheless she was not formidable—on the contrary, pleasing; and though the ladies in the neighborhood said 'she talked like a book,' the easy gentleness of her voice carried off that offence.

"I suppose, Mr. Chillingly," said she, "I ought to apologize for my husband's invitation to what must seem to you so frivolous an entertainment as a child's party. But when Mr. Emlyn asked you to come to us this evening, he was not aware that Clemmy had also invited her young friends. He had looked forward to a rational conversation with you on his own favorite studies."

"It is not so long since I left school, but that I prefer a half holiday to lessons, even from a tutor so pleasant as Mr. Emlyn—

> 'Ah, happy years—once more who would not be a boy!'"

"Nay," said Mrs. Emlyn with a grave smile. "Who that had started so fairly as Mr. Chillingly in the career of man would wish to go back and resume a place among boys?"

"But, my dear Mrs. Emlyn, the line I quoted was wrung from the heart of a man who had already outstripped all rivals in the raceground he had chosen, and who at that moment was in the very Maytime of youth and of fame. And if such a man at such an epoch in his career could sigh to 'be once more a boy,' it must have been when he was thinking of the boy's half holiday, and recoiling from the taskwork he was condemned to learn as man."

"The line you quote is, I think, from 'Childe Harold,' and surely you would not apply to mankind in general the sentiment of a poet so peculiarly self-reflecting (if I may use that expression), and in whom sentiment is often so morbid."

"You are right, Mrs. Emlyn," said Kenelm ingenuously. "Still a boy's half holiday is a very happy thing; and among mankind in general there must be many who would be glad to have it back again. Mr. Emlyn himself, I should think."

"Mr. Emlyn has his half holiday now. Do you not see him standing just outside the window? Do you not hear him laughing? He is a child again in the mirth of his children. I hope you will stay some time in the neighborhood; I am sure you and he will like each other. And it is such a rare delight to him to get a scholar like yourself to talk to."

"Pardon me, I am not a scholar—a very noble title that, and not to be given to a lazy trifler on the surface of book-lore like myself."

"You are too modest. My husband has a copy of your Cambridge prize verses, and says 'the Latinity of them is quite beautiful.' I quote his very words."

"Latin verse-making is a mere knack, little more than a proof that one had an elegant scholar for one's tutor, as I certainly had. But it is by special grace that a real scholar can send forth another real scholar, and a Kennedy produce a Munro. But to return to the more interesting question of half holidays; I declare that Clemmy is leading off your husband in triumph. He is actually going to be Puss in the Corner."

"When you know more of Charles—I mean my husband—you will discover that his whole life is more or less of a holiday. Perhaps because he is not what you accuse yourself of being—he is not lazy; he never wishes to be a boy once more; and taskwork itself is holiday to him. He enjoys shutting himself up in his study and reading—he enjoys a walk with the children—he enjoys visiting the poor—he enjoys his duties as a clergyman. And though I am not always contented for him, though I think he should have had those honors in his profession which have been lavished on men with less ability and less learning, yet he is never discontented himself. Shall I tell you his secret?"

"Do."

"He is a *Thanks-giving Man.* You, too, must have much to thank God for, Mr. Chillingly; and in thanksgiving to God does there not blend usefulness to man, and such sense of pastime in the usefulness as makes each day a holiday?"

Kenelm looked up into the quiet face of this obscure pastor's wife with a startled expression in his own.

"I see, ma'am," said he, "that you have devoted much thought to the study of the æsthetical philosophy as expounded by German thinkers, whom it is rather difficult to understand."

"I, Mr. Chillingly—good gracious. No! What do you mean by your æsthetical philosophy?"

"According to æsthetics, I believe man arrives at his highest state of moral excellence when labor and duty lose all the harshness of effort—when they become the impulse and habit of life; when, as the essential attributes of the beautiful, they are, like beauty, enjoyed as pleasure; and thus, as you expressed, each day becomes a holiday. A lovely doctrine, not perhaps so lofty as that of the Stoics, but more bewitching. Only, very few of us can practically merge our cares and our worries into so serene an atmosphere."

"Some do so without knowing anything of æsthetics and with no pretence to be Stoics; but, then, they are Christians."

"There are some such Christians, no doubt, but they are rarely to be met with. Take Christendom altogether, and it appears to comprise the most agitated population in the world; the population in which there is the greatest grumbling as to the quantity of labor to be done, the loudest complaints that duty instead of a pleasure is a very hard and disagreeable struggle, and in which holidays are fewest and the moral atmosphere least serene. Perhaps,"

added Kenelm, with a deeper shade of thought on his brow, "it is this perpetual consciousness of struggle; this difficulty in merging toil into ease, or stern duty into placid enjoyment; this refusal to ascend for one's self into the calm of an air aloof from the cloud which darkens, and the hailstorm which beats upon, the fellow-men we leave below,—that makes the troubled life of Christendom dearer to heaven, and more conducive to heaven's design in rendering earth the wrestling-ground and not the resting-place of man, than is that of the Brahmin, ever seeking to abstract himself from the Christian's conflicts of action and desire, and to carry into its extremest practice the æsthetic theory, of basking undisturbed in the contemplation of the most absolute beauty human thought can reflect from its idea of divine good!"

Whatever Mrs. Emlyn might have said in reply was interrupted by the rush of the children towards her; they were tired of play, and eager for tea and the magic lantern.

CHAPTER XIII.

The room is duly obscured and the white sheet attached to the wall; the children are seated, hushed, and awe-stricken. And Kenelm is placed next to Lily.

The tritest things in our mortal experience are among the most mysterious. There is more mystery in the growth of a blade of grass than there is in the wizard's mirror or the feats of a spirit medium. Most of us have known the attraction that draws one human being to another, and makes it so exquisite a happiness to sit quiet and mute by another's side; which stills for the moment the busiest thoughts in our brain, the most turbulent desires in our heart, and renders us but conscious of a present ineffable bliss. Most of us have known that. But who has ever been satisfied with any metaphysical account of its why or wherefore? We can but say it is love, and love at that earlier section of its history which has not yet escaped from romance: but by what process that other person has become singled out of the whole universe to attain such special power over one, is a problem that, though many have attempted to solve it, has never attained to solution. In the dim light of the room Kenelm could only distinguish the outlines of Lily's delicate face, but at each new surprise in the show, the face intuitively turned to his, and once, when the terrible image of a sheeted ghost, pursuing a guilty man, passed along the wall, she drew closer to him in her childish fright, and by an involuntary innocent movement laid her hand on his. He detained it tenderly, but, alas! it was withdrawn the next moment; the ghost was succeeded by a couple of dancing dogs. And Lily's ready laugh—partly at the dogs, partly at her own previous alarm—vexed Kenelm's ear. He wished there had been a succession of ghosts, each more appalling than the last.

The entertainment was over, and after a slight refreshment of cakes and wine-and-water the party broke up; the children-visitors went away attended by servant-maids who had come for them. Mrs. Cameron and Lily were to walk home on foot.

"It is a lovely night, Mrs. Cameron," said Mr. Emyln, "and I will attend you to your gate."

"Permit me also," said Kenelm.

"Ay," said the vicar, "it is your own way to Cromwell Lodge."

The path led them through the churchyard as the nearest approach to the brookside. The moonbeams shimmered through the yew-trees and rested on the old tomb—playing, as it were, round the flowers which Lily's hand had, that day, dropped upon its stone. She was walking beside Kenelm—the elder two a few paces in front.

"How silly I was," said she, "to be so frightened at the false ghost! I don't think a real one would frighten me, at least if seen here, in this loving moonlight, and on God's ground!"

"Ghosts, were they permitted to appear except in a magic-lantern, could not harm the innocent. And I wonder why the idea of their apparition should always have been associated with such phantasies of horror, especially by sinless children, who have the least reason to dread them."

"Oh, that is true," cried Lily; "but even when we are grown up there must be times in which we should so long to see a ghost, and feel what a comfort, what a joy it would be."

"I understand you. If some one very dear to us had vanished from our life; if we felt

the anguish of the separation so intensely as to efface the thought that life, as you said so well, 'never dies'; well, yes, then I can conceive that the mourner would yearn to have a glimpse of the vanished one, were it but to ask the sole and only question he could desire to put: 'Art thou happy? May I hope that we shall meet again, never to part—never?'"

Kenelm's voice trembled as he spoke, tears stood in his eyes. A melancholy—vague, unaccountable, overpowering—passed across his heart, as the shadow of some dark-winged bird passes over a quiet stream.

"You have never yet felt this?" asked Lily doubtingly, in a soft voice, full of tender pity, stopping short and looking into his face.

"I? No. I have never yet lost one whom I so loved and so yearned to see again. I was but thinking that such losses may befall us all ere we too vanish out of sight."

"Lily!" called forth Mrs. Cameron, halting at the gate of the burial-ground.

"Yes, auntie?"

"Mr. Emlyn wants to know how far you have got in 'Numa Pompilius.' Come and answer for yourself."

"Oh, those tiresome grown-up people!" whispered Lily, petulantly, to Kenelm. "I do like Mr. Emlyn; he is one of the very best of men. But still he is grown up, and his 'Numa Pompilius' is so stupid."

"My first French lesson-book. No, it is not stupid. Read on. It has hints of the prettiest fairy tale I know, and of the fairy in especial who bewitched my fancies as a boy."

By this time they had gained the gate of the burial-ground.

"What fairy tale? what fairy?" asked Lily, speaking quickly.

"She was a fairy, though in heathen language she is called a nymph—Egeria. She was the link between men and gods to him she loved; she belongs to the race of Gods. True; she, too, may vanish, but she can never die."

"Well, Miss Lily," said the vicar, "and how far in the book I lent you—'Numa Pompilius'?"

"Ask me this day next week."

"I will; but mind you are to translate as you go on. I must see the translation."

"Very well. I will do my best," answered Lily meekly.

Lily now walked by the vicar's side, and Kenelm by Mrs. Cameron's, till they reached Grasmere.

"I will go on with you to the bridge, Mr. Chillingly," said the vicar, when the ladies had disappeared within their garden.

"We had little time to look over my books, and, by-the-by, I hope you at least took the 'Juvenal.'"

"No, Mr. Emlyn; who can quit your house with an inclination for satire? I must come some morning and select a volume from those works which give pleasant views of life and bequeath favorable impressions of mankind. Your wife, with whom I have had an interesting conversation upon the principles of æsthetical philosophy——"

"My wife—Charlotte! She knows nothing about æsthetical philosophy."

"She calls it by another name, but she understands it well enough to illustrate the principles by example. She tells me that labor and duty are so taken up by you

> 'In den heitern Regionen
> Wo die reinen Formen wohnen,'

that they become joy and beauty—is it so?"

"I am sure that Charlotte never said anything half so poetical. But, in plain words, the days pass with me very happily. I should be ungrateful if I were not happy. Heaven has bestowed on me so many sources of love—wife, children, books, and the calling which, when one quits one's own threshold, carries love along with it into the world beyond. A small world in itself—only a parish—but then my calling links it with infinity."

"I see; it is from the sources of love that you draw the supplies for happiness."

"Surely; without love one may be good, but one could scarcely be happy. No one can dream of a heaven except as the abode of love. What writer is it who says, 'How well the human heart was understood by him who first called God by the name of Father'?"

"I do not remember, but it is beautifully said. You evidently do not subscribe to the arguments in Decimus Roach's 'Approach to the Angels.'"

"Ah, Mr. Chillingly! Your words teach me how lacerated a man's happiness may be if he does not keep the claws of vanity closely pared. I actually feel a keen pang when you speak to me of that eloquent panegyric on celi-

bacy, ignorant that the only thing I ever published which I fancied was not without esteem by intellectual readers is a Reply to 'The Approach to the Angels'—a youthful book, written in the first year of my marriage. But it obtained success: I have just revised the tenth edition of it."

"That is the book I will select from your library. You will be pleased to hear that Mr. Roach, whom I saw at Oxford a few days ago, recants his opinions, and, at the age of fifty, is about to be married—he begs me to add, 'not for his own personal satisfaction.'"

"Going to be married!—Decimus Roach! I thought my Reply would convince him at last."

"I shall look to your Reply to remove some lingering doubts in my own mind."

"Doubts in favor of celibacy?"

"Well, if not for laymen, perhaps for a priesthood."

"The most forcible part of my Reply is on that head: read it attentively. I think that, of all sections of mankind, the clergy are those to whom, not only for their own sakes, but for the sake of the community, marriage should be most commended. Why, sir," continued the vicar, warming up into oratorical enthusiasm, "are you not aware that there are no homes in England from which men who have served and adorned their country have issued forth in such prodigal numbers as those of the clergy of our Church? What other class can produce a list so crowded with eminent names as we can boast in the sons we have reared and sent forth into the world? How many statesmen, soldiers, sailors, lawyers, physicians, authors, men of science, have been the sons of us village pastors? Naturally—for with us they receive careful education; they acquire of necessity the simple tastes and disciplined habits which lead to industry and perseverance; and, for the most part, they carry with them throughout life a purer moral code, a more systematic reverence for things and thoughts religious associated with their earliest images of affection and respect, than can be expected from the sons of laymen, whose parents are wholly temporal and worldly. Sir, I maintain that this is a cogent argument, to be considered well by the nation, not only in favor of a married clergy—for, on that score, a million of Roaches could not convert public opinion in this country—but in favor of the Church, the Established Church, which has been so fertile a nursery of illustrious laymen; and I have often thought that one main and undetected cause of the lower tone of morality, public and private, of the greater corruption of manners, of the more prevalent scorn of religion which we see, for instance, in a country so civilized as France, is, that its clergy can train no sons to carry into the contests of earth the steadfast belief in accountability to Heaven."

"I thank you with a full heart," said Kenelm. "I shall ponder well over all that you have so earnestly said. I am already disposed to give up all lingering crotchets as to a bachelor clergy; but, as a layman, I fear that I shall never attain to the purified philanthropy of Mr. Decimus Roach, and, if ever I do marry, it will be very much for my personal satisfaction."

Mr. Emlyn laughed good-humoredly, and, as they had now reached the bridge, shook hands with Kenelm, and walked homewards, along the brookside and through the burial-ground, with the alert step and the uplifted head of a man who has joy in life and admits of no fear in death.

CHAPTER XIV.

For the next two weeks or so Kenelm and Lily met, not indeed so often as the reader might suppose, but still frequently; five times at Mrs. Braefield's, once again at the Vicarage, and twice when Kenelm had called at Grasmere; and, being invited to stay to tea at one of those visits, he stayed the whole evening. Kenelm was more and more fascinated in proportion as he saw more and more of a creature so exquisitely strange to his experience. She was to him not only a poem, but a poem in the Sibylline Books—enigmatical, perplexing conjecture, and somehow or other mysteriously blending its interest with visions of the future.

Lily was indeed an enchanting combination of opposites rarely blended into harmony. Her ignorance of much that girls know before they number half her years, was so relieved by candid, innocent simplicity; so adorned by pretty fancies and sweet beliefs; and so con-

trasted and lit up by gleams of a knowledge that the young ladies we call well educated seldom exhibit—knowledge derived from quick observation of external nature, and impressionable susceptibility to its varying and subtle beauties. This knowledge had been perhaps first instilled, and subsequently nourished, by such poetry as she had not only learned by heart, but taken up as inseparable from the healthful circulation of her thoughts; not the poetry of our own day—most young ladies know enough of that—but selected fragments from the verse of old, most of them from poets now little read by the young of either sex, poets dear to spirits like Coleridge or Charles Lamb. None of them, however, so dear to her as the solemn melodies of Milton. Much of such poetry she had never read in books; it had been taught her in childhood by her guardian the painter. And with all this imperfect, desultory culture, there was such dainty refinement in her every look and gesture, and such deep woman-tenderness of heart. Since Kenelm had commended 'Numa Pompilius' to her study, she had taken very lovingly to that old-fashioned romance, and was fond of talking to him about Egeria as of a creature who had really existed.

But what was the effect that he—the first man of years correspondent to her own with whom she had ever familiarly conversed—what was the effect that Kenelm Chillingly produced on the mind and the heart of Lily?

This was, after all, the question that puzzled him the most—not without reason: it might have puzzled the shrewdest bystander. The artless candor with which she manifested her liking to him was at variance with the ordinary character of maiden love; it seemed more the fondness of a child for a favorite brother. And it was this uncertainty that, in his own thoughts, justified Kenelm for lingering on, and believing that it was necessary to win, or at least to learn more of, her secret heart before he could venture to disclose his own. He did not flatter himself with the pleasing fear that he might be endangering her happiness; it was only his own that was risked. Then, in all those meetings, all those conversations to themselves, there had passed none of the words which commit our destiny to the will of another. If in the man's eyes love would force its way, Lily's frank, innocent gaze chilled it back again to its inward cell. Joyously as she would spring forward to meet him, there was no tell-tale blush on her cheek, no self-betraying tremor in her clear, sweet-toned voice. No; there had not yet been a moment when he could say to himself "She loves me." Often he said to himself, "She knows not yet what love is."

In the intervals of time not passed in Lily's society, Kenelm would take long rambles with Mr. Emlyn, or saunter into Mr. Braefield's drawing-room. For the former he conceived a more cordial sentiment of friendship than he entertained for any man of his own age—a friendship that admitted the noble elements of admiration and respect.

Charles Emlyn was one of those characters in which the colors appear pale unless the light be brought very close to them, and then each tint seems to change into a warmer and richer one. The manner which, at first, you would call merely gentle, becomes unaffectedly genial; the mind you at first might term inert, though well-informed, you now acknowledge to be full of disciplined vigor. Emlyn was not, however, without his little amiable foibles; and it was, perhaps, these that made him lovable. He was a great believer in human goodness, and very easily imposed upon by cunning appeals to "his well-known benevolence." He was disposed to overrate the excellence of all that he once took to his heart. He thought he had the best wife in the world, the best children, the best servants, the best beehive, the best pony, and the best house-dog. His parish was the most virtuous, his church the most picturesque, his vicarage the prettiest, certainly, in the whole shire—perhaps in the whole kingdom. Probably it was this philosophy of optimism which contributed to lift him into the serene realm of æsthetic joy.

He was not without his dislikes as well as likings. Though a liberal Churchman towards Protestant dissenters, he cherished the *odium theologicum* for all that savored of Popery. Perhaps there was another cause for this besides the purely theological one. Early in life a young sister of his had been, to use his phrase, "secretly entrapped" into conversion to the Roman Catholic faith, and had since entered a convent. His affections had been deeply wounded by this loss to the range of them. Mr. Emlyn had also his little infirmities of self-esteem, rather than of vanity. Though he

had seen very little of any world beyond that of his parish, he piqued himself on his knowledge of human nature and of practical affairs in general. Certainly no man had read more about them, especially in the books of the ancient classics. Perhaps it was owing to this that he so little understood Lily—a character to which the ancient classics afforded no counterpart or clue; and perhaps it was this also that made Lily think him "so terribly grown up." Thus, despite his mild good-nature, she did not get on very well with him.

The society of this amiable scholar pleased Kenelm the more, because the scholar evidently had not the remotest idea that Kenelm's sojourn at Cromwell Lodge was influenced by the vicinity to Grasmere. Mr. Emlyn was sure that he knew human nature, and practical affairs in general, too well to suppose that the heir to a rich baronet could dream of taking for a wife a girl without fortune or rank, the orphan ward of a low-born artist only just struggling into reputation; or, indeed, that a Cambridge prizeman, who had evidently read much on grave and dry subjects, and who had no less evidently seen a great deal of polished society, could find any other attraction in a very imperfectly-educated girl, who tamed butterflies and knew no more than they did of fashionable life, than Mr. Emlyn himself felt in the presence of a pretty wayward innocent child—the companion and friend of his Clemmy.

Mrs. Braefield was more discerning; but she had a good deal of tact, and did not as yet scare Kenelm away from her house by letting him see how much she had discerned. She would not even tell her husband, who, absent from the place on most mornings, was too absorbed in the cares of his own business to interest himself much in the affairs of others.

Now Elsie, being still of a romantic turn of mind, had taken it into her head that Lily Mordaunt, if not actually the princess to be found in poetic dramas whose rank was for awhile kept concealed, was yet one of the higher-born daughters of the ancient race whose name she bore, and in that respect no derogatory alliance for Kenelm Chillingly. A conclusion she had arrived at from no better evidence than the well-bred appearance and manners of the aunt, and the exquisite delicacy of the niece's form and features, with the undefinable air of distinction which accompanied even her most careless and sportive moments. But Mrs. Braefield also had the wit to discover that under the infantine ways and phantasies of this almost self-taught girl, there lay, as yet undeveloped, the elements of a beautiful womanhood. So that altogether, from the very day she first re-encountered Kenelm, Elsie's thought had been that Lily was the wife to suit him. Once conceiving that idea, her natural strength of will made her resolve on giving all facilities to carry it out silently and unobtrusively, and therefore skilfully.

"I am so glad to think," she said one day, when Kenelm had joined her walk through the pleasant shrubberies in her garden ground, "that you have made such friends with Mr. Emlyn. Though all hereabouts like him so much for his goodness, there are few who can appreciate his learning. To you it must be a surprise as well as pleasure to find, in this quiet humdrum place, a companion so clever and well-informed; it compensates for your disappointment in discovering that our brook yields such bad sport."

"Don't disparage the brook; it yields the pleasantest banks on which to lie down under old pollard oaks at noon, or over which to saunter at morn and eve. Where those charms are absent even a salmon could not please. Yes; I rejoice to have made friends with Mr. Emlyn. I have learned a great deal from him, and am often asking myself whether I shall ever make peace with my conscience by putting what I have learned into practice."

"May I ask what special branch of learning is that?"

"I scarcely know how to define it. Suppose we call it 'Worth-whileism.' Among the New Ideas which I was recommended to study as those that must govern my generation, the Not-worth-while Idea holds a very high rank; and being myself naturally of calm and equable constitution, that new idea made the basis of my philosophical system. But since I have become intimate with Charles Emlyn I think there is a great deal to be said in favor of Worth-whileism, old idea though it be. I see a man who, with very common-place materials for interest or amusement at his command, continues to be always interested or generally amused; I ask myself why and how? And it seems to me as if the cause started from fixed beliefs which settle his relations with God

and man, and that settlement he will not allow any speculations to disturb. Be those beliefs questionable or not by others, at least they are such as cannot displease a Deity, and cannot fail to be kindly and useful to fellow-mortals. Then he plants these beliefs on the soil of a happy and genial home, which tends to confirm and strengthen and call them into daily practice; and when he goes forth from home, even to the farthest verge of the circle that surrounds it, he carries with him the home influences of kindliness and use. Possibly my line of life may be drawn to the verge of a wider circle than his; but so much the better for interest and amusement, if it can be drawn from the same centre—namely, fixed beliefs daily warmed into vital action in the sunshine of a congenial home."

Mrs. Braefield listened to this speech with pleased attention, and as it came to its close, the name of Lily trembled on her tongue, for she divined that when he spoke of home Lily was in his thoughts; but she checked the impulse, and replied by a generalized platitude.

"Certainly the first thing in life is to secure a happy and congenial home. It must be a terrible trial for the best of us if we marry without love."

"Terrible, indeed, if the one loves and the other does not."

"That can scarcely be your case, Mr. Chillingly, for I am sure you could not marry where you did not love; and do not think I flatter you when I say that a man far less gifted than you can scarcely fail to be loved by the woman he woos and wins."

Kenelm, in this respect one of the modestest of human beings, shook his head doubtingly, and was about to reply in self-disparagement, when, lifting his eyes and looking round, he halted mute and still as if rooted to the spot. They had entered the trellised circle through the roses of which he had first caught sight of the young face that had haunted him ever since.

"Ah!" he said abruptly; "I cannot stay longer here, dreaming away the work-day hours in a fairy ring. I am going to town to-day by the next train."

"You are coming back?"

"Of course—this evening. I left no address at my lodgings in London. There must be a large accumulation of letters—some, no doubt, from my father and mother. I am only going for them. Good-bye. How kindly you have listened to me!"

"Shall we fix a day next week for seeing the remains of the old Roman villa? I will ask Mrs. Cameron and her niece to be of the party."

"Any day you please," said Kenelm, joyfully.

CHAPTER XV.

KENELM did indeed find a huge pile of letters and notes on reaching his forsaken apartment in Mayfair—many of them merely invitations for days long past, none of them of interest except two from Sir Peter, three from his mother, and one from Tom Bowles.

Sir Peter's were short. In the first he gently scolded Kenelm for going away without communicating any address; and stated the acquaintance he had formed with Gordon, the favorable impression that young gentleman had made on him, the transfer of the £20,000, and the invitation given to Gordon, the Traverses, and Lady Glenalvon. The second, dated much later, noted the arrival of his invited guests, dwelt with warmth unusual to Sir Peter on the attractions of Cecilia, and took occasion to refer, not the less emphatically because as it were incidentally, to the sacred promise which Kenelm had given him never to propose to a young lady until the case had been submitted to the examination and received the consent of Sir Peter. "Come to Exmundham, and if I do not give my consent to propose to Cecilia Travers, hold me a tyrant and rebel."

Lady Chillingly's letters were much longer. They dwelt more complainingly on his persistence in eccentric habits—so exceedingly unlike other people, quitting London at the very height of the season, going without even a servant nobody knew where—she did not wish to wound his feelings; but still these were not the ways natural to a young gentleman of station. If he had no respect for himself, he ought to have some consideration for his parents, especially his poor mother. She then proceeded to comment on the elegant manners of Leopold Travers, and the good sense and pleasant conversation of Chillingly Gordon, a young man of whom any mother might be proud. From that subject she diverged to mildly

querulous references to family matters. Parson John had expressed himself very rudely to Mr. Chillingly Gordon upon some book by a foreigner—Comte, or Count, or some such name—in which, so far as she could pretend to judge, Mr. Gordon had uttered some very benevolent sentiments about humanity, which, in the most insolent manner, Parson John had denounced as an attack on religion. But really Parson John was too High Church for her. Having thus disposed of Parson John, she indulged some ladylike wailings on the singular costume of the three Miss Chillinglys. They had been asked by Sir Peter, unknown to her—so like him—to meet their guests; to meet Lady Glenalvon and Miss Travers, whose dress was so perfect (here she described their dress)—and they came in pea-green with pelerines of mock blonde, and Miss Sally with corkscrew ringlets and a wreath of jessamine, "which no girl after eighteen would venture to wear."

"But, my dear," added her ladyship, "your poor father's family are certainly great oddities. I have more to put up with than any one knows. I do my best to carry it off. I know my duties, and will do them."

Family grievances thus duly recorded and lamented, Lady Chillingly returned to her guests.

Evidently unconscious of her husband's designs on Cecilia, she dismissed her briefly: "A very handsome young lady, though rather too blonde for her taste, and certainly with an air *distingué*." Lastly, she enlarged on the extreme pleasure she felt on meeting again *the* friend of her youth, Lady Glenalvon.

"Not at all spoilt by the education of the great world, which, alas! obedient to the duties of wife and mother, however little my sacrifices are appreciated, I have long since relinquished. Lady Glenalvon suggests turning that hideous old moat into a fernery—a great improvement. Of course your poor father makes objections."

Tom's letter was written on black-edged paper, and ran thus:—

"DEAR SIR,—Since I had the honor to see you in London I have had a sad loss—my poor uncle is no more. He died very suddenly after a hearty supper. One doctor says it was apoplexy, another valvular disease of the heart. He has left me his heir, after providing for his sister—no one had an idea that he had saved so much money. I am quite a rich man now. And I shall leave the veterinary business, which of late—since I took to reading, as you kindly advised—is not much to my liking. The principal corn-merchant here has offered to take me into partnership; and, from what I can see, it will be a very good thing, and a great rise in life. But, sir, I can't settle to it at present—I can't settle, as I would wish, to anything. I know you will not laugh at me when I say I have a strange longing to travel for a while. I have been reading books of travels, and they get into my head more than any other books. But I don't think I could leave the country with a contented heart, till I have had just another look at you know whom—just to see her, and know she is happy. I am sure I could shake hands with Will, and kiss her little one without a wrong thought. What do you say to that, dear sir? You promised to write to me about her. But I have not heard from you. Susy, the little girl with the flower-ball, has had a loss too—the poor old man she lived with died within a few days of my dear uncle's decease. Mother moved here, as I think you know, when the forge at Graveleigh was sold; and she is going to take Susy to live with her. She is quite fond of Susy. Pray let me hear from you soon, and do, dear sir, give me your advice about travelling—and about Her. You see I should like Her to think of me more kindly when I am in distant parts.

"I remain, dear sir,

"Your grateful servant,

"T. BOWLES.

"P.S.—Miss Travers has sent me Will's last remittance. There is very little owed me now; so they must be thriving. I hope she is not overworked."

On returning by the train that evening Kenelm went to the house of Will Somers. The shop was already closed, but he was admitted by a trusty servant-maid to the parlor, where he found them all at supper, except indeed the baby, who had long since retired to the cradle, and the cradle had been removed up-stairs. Will and Jessie were very proud when Kenelm invited himself to share their repast, which, though simple, was by no means a bad one. When the meal was over and the supper things removed, Kenelm drew his chair near to the glass door which led into a little garden very neatly kept—for it was Will's pride to attend to it—before he sat down to his more professional work. The door was open, and admitted the coolness of the starlit air and the fragrance of the sleeping flowers.

"You have a pleasant home here, Mrs. Somers."

"We have, indeed, and know how to bless him we owe it to."

"I am rejoiced to think that. How often when God designs a special kindness to us He puts the kindness into the heart of a fellow-man—perhaps the last fellow-man we should have thought of; but in blessing him we thank God who inspired him. Now, my dear friends, I know that you all three suspect me of being the agent whom God chose for His benefits.

You fancy that it was from me came the loan which enabled you to leave Graveleigh and settle here. You are mistaken—you look incredulous."

"It could not be the Squire," exclaimed Jessie. "Miss Travers assured me that it was neither he nor herself. Oh, it must be you, sir. I beg pardon, but who else could it be?"

"Your husband shall guess. Suppose, Will, that you had behaved ill to some one who was nevertheless dear to you, and on thinking over it afterwards felt very sorry and much ashamed of yourself, and suppose that later you had the opportunity and the power to render a service to that person, do you think you would do it?"

"I should be a bad man if I did not."

"Bravo! And supposing that when the person you thus served came to know it was you who rendered the service, he did not feel thankful, he did not think it handsome of you, thus to repair any little harm he might have done you before, but became churlish, and sore, and cross-grained, and with a wretched false pride said that because he had offended you once he resented your taking the liberty of befriending him now, would not you think that person an ungrateful fellow,—ungrateful not only to you his fellow-man—that is of less moment—but ungrateful to the God who put it into your heart to be His human agent in the benefit received?"

"Well, sir, yes, certainly," said Will, with all the superior refinement of his intellect to that of Jessie, unaware of what Kenelm was driving at; while Jessie, pressing her hands tightly together, turning pale, and with a frightened, hurried glance towards Will's face, answered, impulsively—

"Oh, Mr. Chillingly, I hope you are not thinking, not speaking of Mr. Bowles?"

"Whom else should I think or speak of?"

Will rose nervously from his chair, all his features writhing.

"Sir, sir, this is a bitter blow—very bitter, very."

Jessie rushed to Will, flung her arms round him and sobbed.

Kenelm turned quietly to old Mrs. Somers, who had suspended the work on which since supper she had been employed, knitting socks for the baby—

"My dear Mrs. Somers, what is the good of being a grandmother and knitting socks for baby grandchildren, if you cannot assure those silly children of yours that they are too happy in each other to harbor any resentment against a man who would have parted them, and now repents?"

Somewhat to Kenelm's admiration, I dare not say surprise, old Mrs. Somers, thus appealed to, rose from her seat, and, with a dignity of thought or of feeling no one could have anticipated from the quiet peasant woman, approached the wedded pair, lifted Jessie's face with one hand, laid the other on Will's head, and said, "If you don't long to see Mr. Bowles again and say 'the Lord bless you, sir!' you don't deserve the Lord's blessing upon you." Therewith she went back to her seat and resumed her knitting.

"Thank Heaven, we have paid back the best part of the loan," said Will, in very agitated tones, "and I think, with a little pinching, Jessie, and with selling off some of the stock, we might pay the rest; and then"—and then he turned to Kenelm—"and then, sir, we will" (here a gulp) "thank Mr. Bowles."

"This don't satisfy me at all, Will," answered Kenelm; "and since I helped to bring you two together, I claim the right to say I would never have done so could I have guessed you could have trusted your wife so little as to allow a remembrance of Mr. Bowles to be a thought of pain. You did not feel humiliated when you imagined that it was to me you owed some moneys which you have been honestly paying off. Well, then, I will lend you whatever trifle remains to discharge your whole debts to Mr. Bowles, so that you may sooner be able to say to him, 'Thank you.' But between you and me, Will, I think you will be a finer fellow and a manlier fellow if you decline to borrow that trifle of me; if you feel you would rather say 'Thank you' to Mr. Bowles, without the silly notion that when you have paid him his money you owe him nothing for his kindness."

Will looked away, irresolutely. Kenelm went on: "I have received a letter from Mr. Bowles to-day. He has come into a fortune, and thinks of going abroad for a time; but before he goes, he says he should like to shake hands with Will, and be assured by Jessie that all his old rudeness is forgiven. He had no notion that I should blab about the loan; he

wished that to remain always a secret. But between friends there need be no secrets. What say you, Will? As head of this household, shall Mr. Bowles be welcomed here as a friend or not?"

"Kindly welcome," said old Mrs. Somers, looking up from the socks.

"Sir," said Will, with sudden energy, "look here; you have never been in love, I dare say. If you had, you would not be so hard on me. Mr. Bowles was in love with my wife there. Mr. Bowles is a very fine man, and I am a cripple."

"Oh, Will! Will!" cried Jessie.

"But I trust my wife with my whole heart and soul; and, now that the first pang is over, Mr. Bowles shall be, as mother says, kindly welcome—heartily welcome."

"Shake hands. Now you speak like a man, Will. I hope to bring Bowles here to supper before many days are over."

And that night Kenelm wrote to Mr. Bowles:

"My dear Tom,—Come and spend a few days with me at Cromwell Lodge, Moleswich. Mr. and Mrs. Somers wish much to see and to thank you. I could not remain for ever degraded in order to gratify your whim. They would have it that I bought their shop, etc., and I was forced in self-defence to say who it was. More on this and on travels when you come.

"Your true friend,
"K. C."

CHAPTER XVI.

Mrs. Cameron was seated alone in her pretty drawing-room, with a book lying open, but unheeded, on her lap. She was looking away from its pages, seemingly into the garden without, but rather into empty space.

To a very acute and practised observer, there was in her countenance an expression which baffled the common eye.

To the common eye it was simply vacant; the expression of a quiet, humdrum woman, who might have been thinking of some quiet humdrum household detail—found that too much for her, and was now not thinking at all.

But to the true observer, there were in that face indications of a troubled past, still haunted with ghosts never to be laid at rest—indications, too, of a character in herself that had undergone some revolutionary change; it had not always been the character of a woman quiet and humdrum. The delicate outlines of the lip and nostril evinced sensibility, and the deep and downward curve of it bespoke habitual sadness. The softness of the look into space did not tell of a vacant mind, but rather of a mind subdued and overburthened by the weight of a secret sorrow. There was also about her whole presence, in the very quiet which made her prevalent external characteristic, the evidence of manners formed in a high-bred society—the society in which quiet is connected with dignity and grace. The poor understood this better than her rich acquaintances at Moleswich, when they said, "Mrs. Cameron was every inch a lady." To judge by her features she must once have been pretty, not a showy prettiness, but decidedly pre tty. Now, as the eatures were small, all prettiness had faded away in cold gray colorings, and a sort of tamed and slumbering timidity of aspect. She was not only not demonstrative, but must have imposed on herself as a duty the suppression of a demonstration. Who could look at the formation of those lips, and not see that they belonged to the nervous, quick, domonstrative temperament? And yet, observing her again more closely, that suppression of the constitutional tendency to candid betrayal of emotion, would the more enlist your curiosity or interest; because, if physiognomy and phrenology have any truth in them, there was little strength in her character. In the womanly yieldingness of the short curved upper lip, the pleading timidity of the *regard*, the disproportionate but elegant slenderness of the head between the ear and the neck, there were the tokens of one who cannot resist the will, perhaps the whim, of another whom she either loves or trusts.

The book open on her lap is a serious book on the doctrine of grace, written by a popular clergyman of what is termed "the Low Church." She seldom read any but serious books, except where such care as she gave to Lily's education compelled her to read 'Outlines of History and Geography,' or the elementary French books used in seminaries for young ladies. Yet if any one had decoyed Mrs. Cameron into familiar conversation, he would have discovered that she must early have received the education given to young ladies of station. She could speak and write French and Italian

as a native. She had read, and still remembered, such classic authors in either language as are conceded to the use of pupils by the well-regulated taste of orthodox governesses. She had a knowledge of botany, such as botany was taught twenty years ago. I am not sure that, if her memory had been fairly aroused, she might not have come out strong in divinity and political economy, as expounded by the popular manuals of Mrs. Marcet. In short, you could see in her a thoroughbred English lady, who had been taught in a generation before Lily's, and immeasurably superior in culture to the ordinary run of English young ladies taught nowadays. So, in what after all are very minor accomplishments—now made major accomplishments—such as music, it was impossible that a connoisseur should hear her play on the piano without remarking, "That woman has had the best masters of her time." She could only play pieces that belonged to her generation. She had learned nothing since. In short, the whole intellectual culture had come to a dead stop long years ago, perhaps before Lily was born.

Now, while she is gazing into space Mrs. Braefield is announced. Mrs. Cameron does not start from reverie. She never starts. But she makes a weary movement of annoyance, resettles herself, and lays the serious book on the sofa table. Elsie enters, young, radiant, dressed in all the perfection of the fashion, that is, as ungracefully as in the eyes of an artist any gentlewoman can be; but rich merchants who are proud of their wives so insist, and their wives, in that respect, submissively obey them.

The ladies interchange customary salutations, enter into the customary preliminaries of talk, and, after a pause, Elsie begins in earnest.

"But shan't I see Lily? Where is she?"

"I fear she has gone into the town. A poor little boy, who did our errands, has met with an accident—fallen from a cherry-tree."

"Which he was robbing?"

"Probably."

"And Lily has gone to lecture him?"

"I don't know as to that; but he is much hurt, and Lily has gone to see what is the matter with him."

Mrs. Braefield, in her frank outspoken way—

"I don't take much to girls of Lily's age in general, though I am passionately fond of children. You know how I do take to Lily; perhaps because she is so like a child. But she must be an anxious charge to you."

Mrs. Cameron replied by an anxious "No. She is still a child, a very good one; why should I be anxious?"

Mrs. Braefield, impulsively—

"Why, your child must now be eighteen."

Mrs. Cameron—

"Eighteen—is it possible! How time flies! though in a life so monotonous as mine, time does not seem to fly, it slips on like the lapse of water. Let me think—eighteen? No, she is but seventeen—seventeen last May?"

Mrs. Braefield—"Seventeen! A very anxious age for a girl; an age in which dolls cease and lovers begin."

Mrs. Cameron, not so languidly, but still quietly—

"Lily never cared much for dolls—never much for lifeless pets; and as to lovers, she does not dream of them."

Mrs. Braefield, briskly—

"There is no age after six in which girls do not dream of lovers. And here another question arises. When a girl so lovely as Lily is eighteen next birthday, may not a lover dream of her?"

Mrs. Cameron, with that wintry cold tranquillity of manner, which implies that in putting such questions an interrogator is taking a liberty—

"As no lover has appeared, I cannot trouble myself about his dreams."

Said Elsie, inly to herself, "This is the stupidest woman I ever met!" and aloud to Mrs. Cameron—

"Do you not think that your neighbor, Mr. Chillingly, is a very fine young man?"

"I suppose he would be generally considered so. He is very tall."

"A handsome face?"

"Handsome, is it? I dare say."

"What does Lily say?"

"About what?"

"About Mr. Chillingly. Does she not think him handsome?"

"I never asked her."

"My dear Mrs. Cameron, would it not be a very pretty match for Lily? The Chillinglys are among the oldest families in 'Burke's Landed Gentry,' and I believe his father, Sir Peter, has a considerable property."

For the first time in this conversation Mrs.

Cameron betrayed emotion. A sudden flush overspread her countenance, and then left it paler than before. After a pause she recovered her accustomed composure, and replied, rudely,

"It would be no friend to Lily who could put such notions into her head; and there is no reason to suppose that they have entered into Mr. Chillingly's."

"Would you be sorry if they did? Surely you would like your niece to marry well, and there are few chances of her doing so at Moleswich."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Braefield, but the question of Lily's marriage I have never discussed, even with her guardian. Nor, considering the childlike nature of her tastes and habits, rather than the years she has numbered, can I think the time has yet come for discussing it at all."

Elsie, thus rebuked, changed the subject to some newspaper topic which interested the public mind at the moment, and very soon rose to depart. Mrs. Cameron detained the hand that her visitor held out, and said in low tones, which, though embarrassed, were evidently earnest. "My dear Mrs. Braefield, let me trust to your good sense and the affection with which you have honored my niece, not to incur the risk of unsettling her mind by a hint of the ambitious projects for her future on which you have spoken to me. It is extremely improbable that a young man of Mr. Chillingly's expectations would entertain any serious thoughts of marrying out of his own sphere of life, and——"

"Stop, Mrs. Cameron, I must interrupt you. Lily's personal attractions and grace of manner would adorn any station; and have I not rightly understood you to say that though her guardian, Mr. Melville, is, as we all know, a man who has risen above the rank of his parents, your niece, Miss Mordaunt, is, like yourself, by birth a gentlewoman."

"Yes, by birth a gentlewoman," said Mrs. Cameron, raising her head with a sudden pride. But she added, with as sudden a change to a sort of freezing humility, "What does that matter? A girl without fortune, without connection, brought up in this little cottage, the ward of a professional artist, who was the son of a city clerk, to whom she owes even the home she has found, is not in the same sphere of life as Mr. Chillingly, and his parents could not approve of such an alliance for him. It would be most cruel to her, if you were to change the innocent pleasure she may take in the conversation of a clever and well-informed stranger, into the troubled interest which, since you remind me of her age, a girl even so childlike and beautiful as Lily might conceive in one represented to her as the possible partner of her life. Don't commit that cruelty; don't—don't, I implore you!"

"Trust me," cried the warm-hearted Elsie, with tears rushing to her eyes. "What you say so sensibly, so nobly, never struck me before. I do not know much of the world—knew nothing of it till I married—and being very fond of Lily, and having a strong regard for Mr. Chillingly, I fancied I could not serve both better than—than—but I see now; he is very young, very peculiar; his parents might object, not to Lily herself, but to the circumstances you name. And you would not wish her to enter any family where she was not as cordially welcomed as she deserves to be. I am glad to have had this talk with you. Happily, I have done no mischief as yet. I will do none. I had come to propose an excursion to the remains of the Roman Villa, some miles off, and to invite you and Mr. Chillingly. I will no longer try to bring him and Lily together."

"Thank you. But you still misconstrue me. I do not think that Lily cares half so much for Mr. Chillingly as she does for a new butterfly. I do not fear their coming together, as you call it, in the light in which she now regards him, and in which, from all I observe, he regards her. My only fear is that a hint might lead her to regard him in another way, and that way impossible."

Elsie left the house extremely bewildered, and with a profound contempt for Mrs. Cameron's knowledge of what may happen to two young persons brought together."

CHAPTER XVII.

Now, on that very day, and about the same hour in which the conversation just recorded between Elsie and Mrs. Cameron took place, Kenelm, in his solitary noonday wanderings, entered the burial-ground in which Lily had, some short time before, surprised him. And

there he found her, standing beside the flower border which she had placed round the grave of the child whom she had tended and nursed in vain.

The day was clouded and sunless; one of those days that so often instil a sentiment of melancholy into the heart of an English summer.

"You come here too often, Miss Mordaunt," said Kenelm, very softly, as he approached.

Lily turned her face to him, without any start of surprise, with no brightening change in its pensive expression—an expression rare to the mobile play of her features.

"Not too often. I promised to come as often as I could; and, as I told you before, I have never broken a promise yet."

Kenelm made no answer. Presently the girl turned from the spot, and Kenelm followed her silently till she halted before the old tombstone with its effaced inscription.

"See," she said, with a faint smile, "I have put fresh flowers there. Since the day we met in this churchyard, I have thought much of that tomb, so neglected, so forgotten, and——" she paused a moment, and went on abruptly,—"do you not often find that you are much too—what is the word? ah! too egotistical, considering, and pondering, and dreaming greatly too much about yourself?"

"Yes, you are right there; though, till you so accused me, my conscience did not detect it."

"And don't you find that you escape from being so haunted by the thought of yourself, when you think of the dead? they can never have any share in your existence *here*. When you say, 'I shall do this or that to-day;' when you dream, 'I may be this or that to-morrow,' you are thinking and dreaming, all by yourself, for yourself. But you are out of yourself, beyond yourself, when you think and dream of the dead, who can have nothing to do with your to-day or your to-morrow."

As we all know, Kenelm Chillingly made it one of the rules of his life never to be taken by surprise. But when the speech I have written down came from the lips of that tamer of butterflies, he was so startled that all it occurred to him to say, after a long pause, was—

"The dead are the past; and with the past rests all in the present or the future that can take us out of our natural selves. The past decides our present. By the past we divine our future. History, poetry, science, the welfare of states, the advancement of individuals, are all connected with tombstones of which inscriptions are effaced. You are right to honor the mouldered tombstones with fresh flowers. It *is* only in the companionship of the dead that one ceases to be an egotist."

If the imperfectly educated Lily had been above the quick comprehension of the academical Kenelm in her speech, so Kenelm was now above the comprehension of Lily. She too paused before she replied—

"If I knew you better, I think I could understand you better. I wish you knew Lion. I should like to hear you talk with him."

While thus conversing, they had left the burial-ground, and were in the pathway trodden by the common wayfarer.

Lily resumed.

"Yes, I should so like to hear you talk with Lion."

"You mean your guardian, Mr. Melville."

"Yes, you know that."

"And why should you like to hear me talk to him?"

"Because there are some things in which I doubt if he was altogether right, and I would ask you to express my doubts to him; you would, would not you?"

"But why can you not express them yourself to your guardian; are you afraid of him?"

"Afraid, no indeed! But—ah, how many people there are coming this way! There is some tiresome public meeting in the town to-day. Let us take the ferry, the other side of the stream is much pleasanter, we shall have it more to ourselves."

Turning aside to the right while she thus spoke, Lily descended a gradual slope to the margin of the stream, on which they found an old man dozily reclined in his ferry-boat.

As, seated side by side, they were slowly borne over the still waters under a sunless sky, Kenelm would have renewed the subject which his companion had begun, but she shook her head, with a significant glance at the ferryman. Evidently what she had to say was too confidential to admit of a listener, not that the old ferryman seemed likely to take the trouble of listening to any talk that was not addressed to him. Lily soon did address her talk to him—"So, Brown, the cow has quite recovered."

"Yes, Miss, thanks to you, and God bless

you. To think of your beating the old witch like that!"

"'Tis not I who beat the witch, Brown; 'tis the fairy. Fairies, you know, are much more powerful than witches."

"So I find, Miss."

Lily here turned to Kenelm—"Mr. Brown has a very nice milch-cow that was suddenly taken very ill, and both he and his wife were convinced that the cow was bewitched."

"Of course it were, that stands to reason. Did not Mother Wright tell my old woman that she would repent of selling milk, and abuse her dreadful; and was not the cow taken with shivers that very night?"

"Gently, Brown. Mother Wright did not say that your wife would repent of selling milk, but of putting water into it."

"And how did she know that, if she was not a witch? We have the best of customers among the gentlefolks, and never an one that complained."

"And," answered Lily to Kenelm, unheeding this last observation, which was made in a sullen manner, "Brown had a horrid notion of enticing Mother Wright into his ferry-boat, and throwing her into the water, in order to break the spell upon the cow. But I consulted the fairies, and gave him a fairy charm to tie round the cow's neck. And the cow is quite well now, you see. So, Brown, there was no necessity to throw Mother Wright into the water, because she said you put some of it into the milk. But," she added, as the boat now touched the opposite bank, "shall I tell you, Brown, what the fairies said to me this morning?"

"Do, Miss."

"It was this: If Brown's cow yields milk without any water in it, and if water gets into it when the milk is sold, we, the fairies, will pinch Mr. Brown black and blue; and when Brown has his next fit of rheumatics he must not look to the fairies to charm it away."

Herewith Lily dropped a silver groat into Brown's hand, and sprang lightly ashore followed by Kenelm.

"You have quite converted him, not only as to the existence, but as to the beneficial power of fairies," said Kenelm.

"Ah," answered Lily very gravely, "ah, but would it not be nice if there were fairies still? good fairies, and one could get at them? tell them all that troubles and puzzles us, and win from them charms against the witchcraft we practise on ourselves?"

"I doubt if it would be good for us to rely on such supernatural counsellors. Our own souls are so boundless, that the more we explore them the more we shall find worlds spreading upon worlds into infinities; and among the worlds is Fairyland." He added, inly to himself, "Am I not in Fairyland now?"

"Hush!" whispered Lily. "Don't speak more yet awhile, I am thinking over what you have just said, and trying to understand it."

Thus walking silently they gained the little summer-house which tradition dedicated to the memory of Izaak Walton.

Lily entered it and seated herself; Kenelm took his place beside her. It was a small octagon building which, judging by its architecture, might have been built in the troubled reign of Charles I.; the walls plastered within were thickly covered with names, and dates, and inscriptions, in praise of angling, in tribute to Izaak, or with quotations from his books. On the opposite side they could see the lawn of Grasmere, with its great willows dipping into the water. The stillness of the place, with its associations of the angler's still life, were in harmony with the quiet day, its breezeless air, and cloud-vested sky.

"You were to tell me your doubts in connection with your guardian, doubts if he were right in something which you left unexplained, which you could not yourself explain to him."

Lily started as from thoughts alien to the subject thus re-introduced. "Yes, I cannot mention my doubts to him because they relate to me, and he is so good. I owe him so much that I could not bear to vex him by a word that might seem like reproach or complaint. You remember"—here she drew nearer to him; and, with that ingenuous confiding look and movement which had, not unfrequently, enraptured him at the moment, and saddened him on reflection—too ingenuous, too confiding, for the sentiment with which he yearned to inspire her—she turned towards him her frank untimorous eyes, and laid her hand on his arm: "you remember that I said in the burial-ground how much I felt that one is constantly thinking too much of one's self. That must be wrong. In talking to you only about myself I know I am

wrong, but I cannot help it; I must do so. Do not think ill of me for it. You see I have not been brought up like other girls. Was my guardian right in that? Perhaps if he had insisted upon not letting me have my own wilful way, if he had made me read the books which Mr. and Mrs. Emlyn wanted to force on me, instead of the poems and fairy tales which he gave me, I should have had so much more to think of that I should have thought less of myself. You said that the dead were the past; one forgets one's self when one thinks of the dead. If I had read more of the past, had more subjects of interest in the dead whose history it tells, surely I should be less shut up, as it were, in my own small, selfish heart? It is only very lately I have thought of this, only very lately that I have felt sorrow and shame in the thought that I am so ignorant of what other girls know, even little Clemmy. And I dare not say this to Lion when I see him next, lest he should blame himself, when he only meant to be kind, and used to say, 'I don't want Fairy to be learned, it is enough for me to think she is happy.' And oh, I was so happy, till—till of late!"

"Because till of late you only knew yourself as a child. But, now that you feel the desire of knowledge, childhood is vanishing. Do not vex yourself. With the mind which nature has bestowed on you, such learning as may fit you to converse with those dreaded 'grown-up folks' will come to you very easily and quickly. You will acquire more in a month now than you would have acquired in a year when you were a child, and taskwork was loathed, not courted. Your aunt is evidently well instructed, and if I might venture to talk to her about the choice of books——"

"No, don't do that. Lion would not like it."

"Your guardian would not like you to have the education common to other young ladies?"

"Lion forbade my aunt to teach me much that I rather wished to learn. She wanted to do so, but she has given it up at his wish. She only now teases me with those horrid French verbs, and that I know is a mere make-belief. Of course on Sunday it is different; then I must not read anything but the Bible and sermons. I don't care so much for the sermons as I ought, but I could read the Bible all day, every week-day as well as Sunday; and it is from the Bible that I learn that I ought to think less about myself."

Kenelm involuntarily pressed the little hand that lay so innocently on his arm.

"Do you know the difference between one kind of poetry and another?" asked Lily abruptly.

"I am not sure. I ought to know when one kind is good and another kind is bad. But in that respect I find many people, especially professed critics, who prefer the poetry which I call bad to the poetry I think good."

"The difference between one kind of poetry and another, supposing them both to be good," said Lily positively, and with an air of triumph, "is this—I know, for Lion explained it to me. In one kind of poetry the writer throws himself entirely out of his existence, he puts himself into other existences quite strange to his own. He may be a very good man, and he writes his best poetry about very wicked men; he would not hurt a fly, but he delights in describing murderers. But in the other kind of poetry the writer does not put himself into other existences, he expresses his own joys and sorrows, his own individual heart and mind. If he could not hurt a fly, he certainly could not make himself at home in the cruel heart of a murderer. There, Mr. Chillingly, that is the difference between one kind of poetry and another."

"Very true," said Kenelm, amused by the girl's critical definitions. "The difference between dramatic poetry and lyrical. But may I ask what that definition has to do with the subject into which you so suddenly introduced it?"

"Much—for when Lion was explaining this to my aunt, he said, 'A perfect woman is a poem; but she can never be a poem of the one kind, never can make herself at home in the hearts with which she has no connection, never feel any sympathy with crime and evil; she must be a poem of the other kind, weaving out poetry from her own thoughts and fancies.' And, turning to me, he said, smiling, 'That is the poem I wish Lily to be. Too many dry books would only spoil the poem.' And you now see why I am so ignorant, and so unlike other girls, and why Mr. and Mrs. Emlyn look down upon me."

"You wrong at least Mr. Emlyn, for it was he who first said to me, 'Lily Mordaunt is a poem.'"

"Did he? I shall love him for that. How pleased Lion will be!"

"Mr. Melville seems to have an extraordinary influence over your mind," said Kenelm, with a jealous pang.

"Of course. I have neither father nor mother, Lion has been both to me. Aunty has often said, 'You cannot be too grateful to your guardian; without him I should have no home to shelter you, no bread to give you.' *He* never said that—he would be very angry with aunty if he knew she had said it. When he does not call me Fairy he calls me Princess. I would not displease him for the world."

"He is very much older than you, old enough to be your father, I hear."

"I dare say. But if he were twice as old I could not love him better."

Kenelm smiled—the jealousy was gone. Certainly not thus could any girl, even Lily, speak of one with whom, however she might love him, she was likely to fall in love.

Lily now rose up, rather slowly and wearily. "It is time to go home; aunty will be wondering what keeps me away—come."

They took their way towards the bridge opposite to Cromwell Lodge.

It was not for some minutes that either broke the silence. Lily was the first to do so, and with one of those abrupt changes of topic which were common to the restless play of her secret thoughts.

"You have father and mother still living, Mr. Chillingly?"

"Thank Heaven, yes."

"Which do you love the best?"

"That is scarcely a fair question. I love my mother very much; but my father and I understand each other better than——"

"I see—it is so difficult to be understood. No one understands me."

"I think I do."

Lily shook her head, with an energetic movement of dissent.

"At least as well as a man can understand a young lady."

"What sort of a young lady is Miss Cecilia Travers?"

"Cecilia Travers! When and how did you ever hear that such a person existed?"

"That big London man whom they call Sir Thomas mentioned her name the day we dined at Braefieldville."

"I remember—as having been at the Court ball."

"He said she was very handsome."

"So she is."

"Is she a poem, too?"

"No; that never struck me."

"Mr. Emlyn, I suppose, would call her perfectly brought up—well educated. He would not raise his eyebrows at her as he does at me, poor me, Cindrella!"

"Ah, Miss Mordaunt, you need not envy her. Again let me say that you could very soon educate yourself to the level of any young ladies who adorn the Court balls."

"Ay; but then I should not be a poem," said Lily, with a shy arch side-glance at his face.

They were now on the bridge, and before Kenelm could answer, Lily resumed quickly, "You need not come any farther, it is out of your way."

"I cannot be so disdainfully dismissed, Miss Mordaunt; I insist on seeing you to, at least your garden gate."

Lily made no objection, and again spoke—

"What sort of country do you live in when at home—is it like this?"

"Not so pretty; the features are larger, more hill and dale and woodland; yet there is one feature in our grounds which reminds me a little of this landscape: a light stream, somewhat wider, indeed, than your brooklet; but here and there the banks are so like those by Cromwell Lodge that I sometimes start and fancy myself at home. I have a strange love for rivulets, and all running waters, and in my foot wanderings I find myself magnetically attracted towards them."

Lily listened with interest, and after a short pause said with a half-suppressed sigh, "Your home is much finer than any place here, even than Braefieldville, is it not? Mrs. Braefield says your father is very rich."

"I doubt if he is richer than Mr. Braefield, and though his house may be larger than Braefieldville, it is not so smartly furnished, and has no such luxurious hothouses and conservatories. My father's tastes are like mine, very simple. Give him his library, and he would scarcely miss his fortune if he lost it. He has in this one immense advantage over me."

"You would miss fortune?" said Lily, quickly.

"Not that; but my father is never tired of

books. And shall I own it? there are days when books tire me almost as much as they do you."

They were now at the garden gate. Lily, with one hand on the latch, held out the other to Kenelm, and her smile lit up the dull sky like a burst of sunshine, as she looked in his face and vanished.

BOOK SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

KENELM did not return home till dusk, and just as he was sitting down to his solitary meal there was a ring at the bell, and Mrs. Jones ushered in Mr. Thomas Bowles.

Though that gentleman had never written to announce the day of his arrival, he was not the less welcome.

"Only," said Kenelm, "if you perserve the appetite I have lost, I fear you will find meagre fare to-day. Sit down, man."

"Thank you, kindly, but I dined two hours ago in London, and I really can eat nothing more."

Kenelm was too well-bred to press unwelcome hospitalities. In a very few minutes his frugal repast was ended, the cloth removed, the two men were left alone.

"Your room is here, of course, Tom; that was engaged from the day I asked you, but you ought to have given me a line to say when to expect you, so that I could have put our hostess on her mettle as to dinner or supper. You smoke still, of course: light your pipe."

"Thank you, Mr. Chillingly, I seldom smoke now; but if you will excuse a cigar," and Tom produced a very smart cigar-case.

"Do as you would at home. I shall send word to Will Somers that you and I sup there to-morrow. You forgive me for letting out your secret. All straightforward now and henceforth. You come to their hearth as a friend, who will grow dearer to them both every year. Ah, Tom, this love for woman seems to me a very wonderful thing. It may sink a man into such deeps of evil, and lift a man into such heights of good."

"I don't know as to the good," said Tom, mournfully, and laying aside his cigar.

"Go on smoking; I should like to keep you company; can you spare me one of your cigars?"

Tom offered his case. Kenelm extracted a cigar, lighted it, drew a few whiffs, and when he saw that Tom had resumed his own cigar, recommenced conversation.

"You don't know as to the good; but tell me honestly, do you think if you had not loved Jessie Wiles, you would be as good a man as you are now?"

"If I am better than I was, it is not because of my love for the girl."

"What then?"

"The loss of her."

Kenelm started, turned very pale, threw aside the cigar, rose and walked the room to and fro with very quick but very irregular strides.

Tom continued quietly. "Suppose I had won Jessie and married her, I don't think any idea of improving myself would have entered my head. My uncle would have been very much offended at my marrying a day-laborer's daughter, and would not have invited me to Luscombe. I should have remained at Graveleigh, with no ambition of being more than a common farrier, an ignorant, noisy, quarrelsome man; and if I could not have made Jessie as fond of me as I wished, I should not have broken myself of drinking, and I shudder to think what a brute I might have been, when I see in the newspapers an account of some drunken wife-beater. How do we know but what that wife-beater loved his wife dearly before marriage, and she did not care for him? His

home was unhappy, and so he took to drink and to wife-beating."

"I was right, then," said Kenelm, halting his strides, "when I told you it would be a miserable fate to be married to a girl whom you loved to distraction, and whose heart you could never warm to you, whose life you could never render happy."

"So right!"

"Let us drop that part of the subject at present," said Kenelm, reseating himself, "and talk about your wish to travel. Though contented that you did not marry Jessie, though you can now, without anguish, greet her as the wife of another, still there are some lingering thoughts of her that make you restless; and you feel that you could more easily wrench yourself from these thoughts in a marked change of scene and adventure, that you might bury them altogether in the soil of a strange land. Is it so?"

"Ay, something of that, sir."

Then Kenelm roused himself to talk of foreign lands, and to map out a plan of travel that might occupy some months. He was pleased to find that Tom had already learned enough of French to make himself understood at least upon commonplace matters, and still more pleased to discover that he had been not only reading the proper guide-books or manuals descriptive of the principal places in Europe worth visiting, but that he had acquired an interest in the places; interest in the fame attached to them by their history in the past, or by the treasures of art they contained.

So they talked far into the night, and when Tom retired to his room, Kenelm let himself out of the house noiselessly, and walked with slow steps towards the old summer-house in which he had sat with Lily. The wind had risen, scattering the clouds that had veiled the preceding day, so that the stars were seen in far chasms of the sky beyond—seen for a while in one place, aud when the swift clouds rolled over them there, shining out elsewhere. Amid the varying sounds of the trees, through which swept the night gusts, Kenelm fancied he could distinguish the sigh of the willow on the opposite lawn of Grasmere.

CHAPTER II.

Kenelm despatched a note to Will Somers early the next morning, inviting himself and Mr. Bowles to supper that evening. His tact was sufficient to make him aware that in such social meal there would be far less restraint for each and all concerned than in a more formal visit from Tom during the day-time; and when Jessie, too, was engaged with customers to the shop.

But he led Tom through the town and showed him the shop itself, with its pretty goods at the plate-glass windows, and its general air of prosperous trade; then he carried him off into the lanes and fields of the country, drawing out the mind of his companion, and impressed with great admiration of its marked improvement in culture, and in the trains of thought which culture opens out and enriches.

But throughout all their multiform range of subject Kenelm could perceive that Tom was still preoccupied and abstracted; the idea of the coming interview with Jessie weighed upon him.

When they left Cromwell Lodge at nightfall, to repair to the supper at Will's, Kenelm noticed that Bowles had availed himself of the contents of his carpet bag, to make some refined alterations in his dress. The alterations became him.

When they entered the parlor, Will rose from his chair with the evidence of deep emotion on his face, advanced to Tom, took his hand and grasped and dropped it without a word. Jessie saluted both guests alike, with drooping eyelids and an elaborate curtsey. The old mother alone was perfectly self-possessed and up to the occasion.

"I am heartily glad to see you, Mr. Bowles," said she, "and so all three of us are, and ought to be; and if baby was older, there would be four."

"And where on earth have you hidden baby?" cried Kenelm. "Surely he might have been kept up for me to-night, when I was expected; the last time I supped here I took you by surprise, and therefore had no right to complain of baby's want of respect to her parents' friends."

Jessie raised the window-curtain, and pointed to the cradle behind it. Kenelm linked his arm in Tom's, led him to the cradle, and leav-

ing him alone to gaze on the sleeping inmate, seated himself at the table, between old Mrs. Somers and Will. Will's eyes were turned away towards the curtain, Jessie holding its folds aside, and the formidable Tom, who had been the terror of his neighborhood, bending smiling over the cradle; till at last he laid his large hand on the pillow, gently, timidly, careful not to awake the helpless sleeper, and his lips moved, doubtless with a blessing; then he too came to the table, seating himself, and Jessie carried the cradle up-stairs.

Will fixed his keen intelligent eyes on his bygone rival; and noticing the changed expression of the once aggressive countenance, the changed costume in which, without tinge of rustic foppery, there was the token of a certain gravity of station scarcely compatible with a return to old loves and old habits in the village world, the last shadow of jealousy vanished from the clear surface of Will's affectionate nature.

"Mr. Bowles," he exclaimed, impulsively, "you have a kind heart, and a good heart, and a generous heart. And your coming here to-night on this friendly visit is an honor which—which"—"Which," interrupted Kenelm, compassionating Will's embarrassment, "is on the side of us single men. In this free country a married man who has a male baby may be father to the Lord Chancellor or the Archbishop of Canterbury. But—well, my friends, such a meeting as we have to-night does not come often; and after supper let us celebrate it with a bowl of punch. If we have headaches the next morning none of us will grumble."

Old Mrs. Somers laughed out jovially. "Bless you, sir, I did not think of the punch; I will go and see about it," and, baby's socks still in her hands, she hastened from the room.

What with the supper, what with the punch, and what with Kenelm's art of cheery talk on general subjects, all reserve, all awkwardness, all shyness between the convivialists, rapidly disappeared. Jessie mingled in the talk; perhaps (excepting only Kenelm) she talked more than the others, artlessly, gaily, no vestige of the old coquetry; but, now and then, with a touch of genteel finery, indicative of her rise in life, and of the contact of the fancy shopkeeper with noble customers. It was a pleasant evening—Kenelm had resolved that it should be so. Not a hint of the obligations to Mr. Bowles escaped until Will, following his visitor to the door, whispered to Tom, "You don't want thanks, and I can't express them. But when we say our prayers at night, we have always asked God to bless him who brought us together, and has since made us so prosperous—I mean Mr. Chillingly. To-night there will be another besides him, for whom we shall pray, and for whom baby, when he is older, will pray too."

Therewith Will's voice thickened; and he prudently receded, with no unreasonable fear lest the punch might make him too demonstrative of emotion if he said more.

Tom was very silent on the return to Cromwell Lodge; it did not seem the silence of depressed spirits, but rather of quiet meditation, from which Kenelm did not attempt to rouse him.

It was not till they reached the garden pales of Grasmere that Tom, stopping short, and turning his face to Kenelm, said—

"I am very grateful to you for this evening—very."

"It has revived no painful thoughts, then?"

"No; I feel so much calmer in mind than I ever believed I could have been, after seeing her again."

"Is it possible!" said Kenelm, to himself. "How should I feel if I ever saw in Lily the wife of another man: the mother of his child?" At that question he shuddered, and an involuntary groan escaped from his lips. Just then having, willingly in those precincts, arrested his steps, when Tom paused to address him, something softly touched the arm which he had rested on the garden pale. He looked and saw that it was Blanche. The creature, impelled by its instincts towards night-wanderings, had, somehow or other, escaped from its own bed within the house, and hearing a voice that had grown somewhat familiar to its ear, crept from among the shrubs behind upon the edge of the pale. There it stood, with arched back, purring low as in pleased salutation.

Kenelm bent down and covered with kisses the blue ribbon which Lily's hand had bound round the favorite's neck. Blanche submitted to the caress for a moment, and then catching a slight rustle among the shrubs, made by some awaking bird, sprang in to the thick of the quivering leaves and vanished.

Kenelm moved on with a quick impatient

stride, and no further words were exchanged between him and his companion till they reached their lodging and parted for the night.

CHAPTER III.

THE next day, towards noon, Kenelm and his visitor, walking together along the brook side, stopped before Izaak Walton's summer-house, and, at Kenelm's suggestion, entered therein to rest, and more at their ease to continue the conversation they had begun.

"You have just told me," said Kenelm, "that you feel as if a load were taken off your heart, now that you have again met Jessie Somers, and that you find her so changed that she is no longer the woman you loved. As to the change, whatever it be, I own, it seems to me for the better, in person, in manners, in character; of course I should not say this, if I were not convinced of your perfect sincerity when you assured me that you are cured of the old wound. But I feel so deely interested in the question how a fervent love, once entertained and enthroned in the heart of a man so earnestly affectionate and so warm-blooded as yourself, can be, all of a sudden, at a single interview, expelled or transferred into the calm sentiment of friendship, that I pray you to explain?"

"That is what puzzles me, sir," answered Tom, passing his hand over his forehead. And I don't know if I can explain it."

"Think over it, and try."

Tom mused for some moments and then began. "You see, sir, that I was a very different man myself when I fell in love with Jessie Wiles, and said, 'Come what may, that girl shall be my wife. Nobody else shall have her.'"

"Agreed; go on."

"But while I was becoming a different man, when I thought of her—and I was always thinking of her—I still pictured her to myself as the same Jessie Wiles; and though, when I did see her again at Graveleigh, after she had married—the day—"

"You saved her from the insolence of the Squire."

"—She was but very recently married. I did not realize her as married. I did not see her husband, and the difference within myself was only then beginning. Well, so all the time I was reading and thinking, and striving to improve my old self at Luscombe, still Jessie Wiles haunted me as the only girl I had ever loved, ever could love; I could not believe it possible that I could ever marry any one else. And lately I have been much pressed to marry some one else; all my family wish it; but the face of Jessie rose up before me, and I said to myself, 'I should be a base man if I married one woman, while I could not get another woman out of my head.' I must see Jessie once more, must learn whether her face is now really the face that haunts me when I sit alone; and I have seen her, and it is not that face; it may be handsomer, but it is not a girl's face, it is the face of a wife and a mother. And, last evening, while she was talking with an open-heartedness which I had never found in her before, I became strangely conscious of the difference in myself that had been silently at work within the last two years or so. Then, sir, when I was but an ill-conditioned, uneducated, petty village farrier, there was no inequality between me and a peasant girl; or, rather, in all things except fortune, the peasant girl was much above me. But last evening I asked myself, on watching her and listening to her talk, 'If Jessie were now free, should I press her to be my wife?' and I answered myself 'No.'"

Kenelm listened with rapt attention, and exclaimed briefly, but passionately, "Why?"

"It seems as if I were giving myself airs to say why. But, sir, lately I have been thrown among persons, women as well as men, of a higher class than I was born in; and in a wife I should want a companion up to their mark, and who would keep me up to mine; and ah, sir, I don't feel as if I could find that companion in Mrs. Somers."

"I understand you now, Tom. But you are spoiling a silly romance of mine. I had fancied the little girl with the flower face would grow up to supply the loss of Jessie; and, I am so ignorant of the human heart, I did think it would take all the years required for the little girl to open into a woman, before the loss of the old love could be supplied. I see now that the poor little child with the flower face has no chance."

"Chance? Why, Mr. Chillingly," cried

Tom, evidently much nettled, "Susy is a dear little thing, but she is scarcely more than a mere charity girl. Sir, when I last saw you in London you touched on that matter as if I were still the village farrier's son, who might marry a village laborer's daughter. But," added Tom, softening down his irritated tone of voice, "even if Susy were a lady born, I think a man would make a very great mistake, if he thought he could bring up a little girl to regard him as a father; and then, when she grew up, expect her to accept him as a lover."

"Ah, you think that!" exclaimed Kenelm eagerly, and turning eyes that sparkled with joy towards the lawn of Grasmere. "You think that; it is very sensibly said—well—and you have been pressed to marry, and have hung back till you had seen again Mrs. Somers. Now you will be better disposed to such a step; tell me about it."

"I said, last evening, that one of the principal capitalists at Luscome, the leading corn-merchant, had offered to take me into partnership. And, sir, he has an only daughter, she is a very amiable girl, has had a first-rate education, and has such pleasant manners and way of talk, quite a lady. If I married her I should soon be the first man at Luscome, and Luscombe, as you are no doubt aware, returns two members to Parliament; who knows, but that some day the farrier's son might be——" Tom stopped abruptly—abashed at the aspiring thought which, while speaking, had deepened his hardy color and flashed from his honest eyes.

"Ah!" said Kenelm, almost mournfully, "is it so; must each man in his life play many parts? Ambition succeeds to love, the reasoning brain to the passionate heart. True, you are changed; my Tom Bowles is gone."

"Not gone in his undying gratitude to you, sir," said Tom, with great emotion. "Your Tom Bowles would give up all his dreams of wealth or of rising in life, and go through fire and water to serve the friend who first bid him be a new Tom Bowles! Don't despise me as your own work: you said to me that terrible day, when madness was on my brow and crime within my heart, 'I will be to you the truest friend man ever found in man.' So you have been. You commanded me to read, you commanded me to think, you taught me that body should be the servant of mind."

"Hush, hush, times are altered; it is you who can teach me now. Teach me, teach me; how does ambition replace love? How does the desire to rise in life become the all-mastering passion, and, should it prosper, the all-atoning consolation of our life? We can never be as happy, though we rose to the throne of the Cæsars, as we dream that we could have been, had Heaven but permitted us to dwell in the obscurest village, side by side with the woman we love."

Tom was exceedingly startled by such a burst of irrepressible passion from the man who had told him, that though friends were found only once in a life, sweethearts were as plentiful as blackberries.

Again he swept his hand over his forehead, and replied hesitatingly, "I can't pretend to say what may be the case with others. But to judge by my own case, it seems to be this: a young man who, out of his own business, has nothing to interest or excite him, finds content, interest, and excitement when he falls in love; and then, whether for good or ill, he thinks there is nothing like love in the world, he don't care a fig for ambition then. Over and over again did my poor uncle ask me to come to him at Luscombe, and represent all the worldly advantage it would be to me; but I could not leave the village in which Jessie lived, and, besides, I felt myself unfit to be anything higher than I was. But when I had been some time at Luscombe, and gradually got accustomed to another sort of people, and another sort of talk, then I began to feel interest in the same objects that interested those about me; and when, partly by mixing with better educated men, and partly by the pains I took to educate myself, I felt that I might now more easily rise above my uncle's rank of life than two years ago I could have risen above a farrier's forge, then the ambition to rise did stir in me, and grew stronger every day. Sir, I don't think you can wake up a man's intellect but what you wake with it emulation. And, after all, emulation is ambition."

"Then, I suppose, I have no emulation in me, for certainly I have no ambition."

"That I can't believe, sir; other thoughts may cover it over and keep it down for a time. But sooner or later, it will force its way to the top, as it has done with me. To get on in life, to be respected by those who know you, more

and more as you grow older, I call that a manly desire. I am sure it comes as naturally to an Englishman as—as——"

"As the wish to knock down some other Englishman who stands in his way, does. I perceive now that you were always a very ambitious man, Tom; the ambition has only taken another direction. Cæsar might have been

'But the first wrestler on the green.'

"And now, I suppose, you abandon the idea of travel; you will return to Luscombe, cured of all regret for the loss of Jessie; you will marry the young lady you mention, and rise, through progressive steps of alderman and mayor, into the rank of Member for Luscombe."

"All that may come in good time," answered Tom, not resenting the tone of irony in which he was addressed, "but I still intend to travel; a year so spent must render me all the more fit for any station I aim at. I shall go back to Luscombe to arrange my affairs, come to terms with Mr. Leland the corn-merchant against my return, and——"

"The young lady is to wait till then."

"Emily."

"Oh, that is the name? Emily! a much more elegant name than Jessie."

"Emily," continued Tom, with an unruffled placidity, which, considering the aggravating bitterness for which Kenelm had exchanged his wonted dulcitudes of indifferentism, was absolutely saintlike, "Emily knows that if she were my wife I should be proud of her, and will esteem me the more if she feels how resolved I am that she shall never be ashamed of me."

"Pardon me, Tom," said Kenelm, softened and laying his hand on his friend's shoulder with brotherlike tenderness. "Nature has made you a thorough gentleman; and you could not think and speak more nobly if you had come into the world as the head of all the Howards."

CHAPTER IV.

Tom went away the next morning. He declined to see Jessie again, saying curtly, "I don't wish the impression made on me the other evening to incur a chance of being weakened."

Kenelm was in no mood to regret his friend's departure. Despite all the improvement in Tom's manners and culture, which raised him so much nearer to equality with the polite and instructed heir of the Chillinglys, Kenelm would have felt more in sympathy, and *rapport*, with the old disconsolate fellow-wanderer who had reclined with him on the grass, listening to the Minstrel's talk or verse, than he did with the practical, rising citizen of Luscombe. To the young lover of Lily Mordaunt there was a discord, a jar, in the knowledge that the human heart admits of such well-reasoned, well-justified transfers of allegiance; a Jessie to-day, or an Emily to-morrow—"*La reine est morte; vive la reine.*"

An hour or two after Tom had gone, Kenelm found himself almost mechanically led towards Braefieldville. He had instinctively divined Elsie's secret wish with regard to himself and Lily, however skilfully she thought she had concealed it.

At Braefieldville he should hear talk of Lily, and in the scenes where Lily had been first beheld.

He found Mrs. Braefield alone in the drawing-room, seated by a table covered with flowers, which she was assorting and intermixing for the vases to which they were destined.

It struck him that her manner was more reserved than usual and somewhat embarrassed; and when, after a few preliminary matters of small talk, he rushed boldly *in medias res*, and asked if she had seen Mrs. Cameron lately? She replied briefly, "Yes, I called there the other day," and immediately changed the conversation to the troubled state of the Continent.

Kenelm was resolved not to be so put off, and presently returned to the charge.

"The other day you proposed an excursion to the site of the Roman villa, and said you would ask Mrs. Cameron to be of the party. Perhaps you have forgotten it?"

"No; but Mrs. Cameron declines. We can ask the Emlyns instead. He will be an excellent *cicerone*."

"Excellent! Why did Mrs. Cameron decline?"

Elsie hesitated, and then lifted her clear brown eyes to his face, with a sudden determination to bring matters to a crisis.

"I cannot say why Mrs. Cameron declined,

but in declining she acted very wisely and very honorably. Listen to me, Mr. Chillingly. You know how highly I esteem, and how cordially I like you, and judging by what I felt for some weeks, perhaps longer, after we parted at Tor Hadham——" Here again she hesitated, and with a half laugh and a slight blush, again went resolutely on. "If I were Lily's aunt or elder sister, I should do as Mrs. Cameron does; decline to let Lily see much more of a young gentleman too much above her in wealth and station for——"

"Stop," cried Kenelm, haughtily, "I cannot allow that any man's wealth or station would warrant his presumption in thinking himself above Miss Mordaunt."

"Above her in natural grace and refinement, certainly not. But in the world there are other considerations which, perhaps, Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly might take into account."

"You did not think of that before you last saw Mrs. Cameron."

"Honestly speaking, I did not. Assured that Miss Mordaunt was a gentlewoman by birth, I did not sufficiently reflect upon other disparities."

"You know, then, that she is by birth a gentlewoman?"

"I only know it as all here do, by the assurance of Mrs. Cameron, whom no one could suppose not to be a lady. But there are different degrees of lady and of gentleman, which are little heeded in the ordinary intercourse of society, but become very perceptible in questions of matrimonial alliance; and Mrs. Cameron herself says very plainly that she does not consider her niece to belong to that station in life from which Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly would naturally wish their son should select his bride. Then (holding out her hand) pardon me if I have wounded or offended you. I speak as a true friend to you and to Lily both. Earnestly I advise you, if Miss Mordaunt be the cause of your lingering here, earnestly I advise you to leave while yet in time for her peace of mind and your own."

"Her peace of mind," said Kenelm, in low faltering tones, scarcely hearing the rest of Mrs. Braefield's speech. "Her peace of mind. Do you sincerely think that she cares for me—could care for me—if I stayed?"

"I wish I could answer you decidedly. I am not in the secrets of her heart. I can but conjecture that it might be dangerous for the peace of any young girl to see too much of a man like yourself, to divine that he loved her, and not to be aware that he could not, with the approval of his family, ask her to become his wife."

Kenelm bent his face down, and covered it with his right hand. He did not speak for some moments. Then he rose, the fresh cheek very pale, and said—

"You are right. Miss Mordaunt's peace of mind must be the first consideration. Excuse me if I quit you thus abruptly. You have given me much to think of, and I can only think of it adequately when alone."

CHAPTER V.

FROM KENELM CHILLINGLY TO SIR PETER CHILLINGLY.

"My Father, my dear Father,—This is no reply to your letters. I know not if itself can be called a letter. I cannot yet decide whether it be meant to reach your hands. Tired with talking to myself, I sit down to talk to you. Often have I reproached myself for not seizing every fitting occasion to let you distinctly know how warmly I love, how deeply I reverence you; you, O friend, O father. But we Chillinglys are not a demonstrative race. I don't remember that you, by words, ever expressed to me the truth that you love your son infinitely more than he deserves. Yet, do I not know that you would send all your beloved old books to the hammer, rather than I should pine in vain for some untried, if sinless, delight on which I had set my heart? And do you not know, equally well, that I would part with all my heritage, and turn day-laborer, rather than you should miss the beloved old books?

"That mutual knowledge is taken for granted in all that my heart yearns to pour forth to your own. But, if I divine aright, a day is coming when, as between you and me, there must be a sacrifice on the part of one to the other. If so, I implore that the sacrifice may come from you. How is this? How am I so ungenerous, so egotistical, so selfish, so ungratefully unmindful of all I already owe to

you, and may never repay? I can only answer, 'It is fate, it is nature, it is love'—

* * * * *

"Here I must break off. It is midnight, the moon halts opposite to the window at which I sit, and on the stream that runs below there is a long narrow track on which every wave trembles in her light; on either side of the moonlit track all the other waves, running equally to their grave in the invisible deep, seem motionless and dark. I can write no more."

* * * * *

Dated two days later.

"They say she is beneath us in wealth and station. Are we, my father—we, two well-born gentlemen—coveters of gold or lackeys of the great? When I was at College, if there were any there more heartily despised that another, it was the parasite and the tuft-hunter; the man who chose his friends according as their money or their rank might be of use to him. If so mean where the choice is so little important to the happiness and career of a man who has something of manhood in him, how much more mean to be the parasite and tuft-hunter in deciding what woman to love, what woman to select as the sweetener and ennobler of one's everyday life! Could she be to my life that sweetener, that ennobler? I firmly believe it. Already life itself has gained a charm that I never even guessed in it before; already I begin, though as yet but faintly and vaguely, to recognize that interest in the objects and aspirations of my fellow-men which is strongest in those whom posterity ranks among its ennoblers. In this quiet village it is true that I might find examples enough to prove that man is not meant to meditate upon life, but to take active part in it, and in that action to find his uses. But I doubt if I should have profited by such examples; if I should not have looked on this small stage of the world as I have looked on the large one, with the indifferent eyes of a spectator on a trite familiar play carried on by ordinary actors, had not my whole being suddenly leapt out of philosophy into passion, and, at once made warmly human, sympathized with humanity wherever it burned and glowed. Ah, is there to be any doubt of what station, as mortal bride, is due to her—her, my princess, my Fairy? If so, how contented you shall be, my father, with the worldly career of your son! how perseveringly he will strive (and when did perseverance fail?) to supply all his deficiencies of intellect, genius, knowledge, by the energy concentrated on a single object which—more than intellect, genius, knowledge, unless they attain to equal energy equally concentrated—commands what the world calls honors.

"Yes, with her, with her as the bearer of my name, with her to whom I, whatever I might do of good or of great, could say, 'It is thy work,' I promise that you shall bless the day when you took to your arms a daughter.

* * * * *

"'Thou art in contact with the beloved in all that thou feelest elevated above thee.' So is it written by one of those weird Germans who search in our bosoms for the seeds of buried truths, and conjure them into flowers before we ourselves were even aware of the seeds.

"Every thought that associates itself with my beloved seems to me born with wings.

* * * * *

I have just seen her, just parted from her. Since I had been told—kindly, wisely told—that I had no right to hazard her peace of mind unless I were privileged to woo and to win her, I promised myself that I would shun her presence until I had bared my heart to you, as I am doing now, and received that privilege from yourself; for even had I never made the promise that binds my honor, your consent and blessing must hallow my choice. I do not feel as if I could dare to ask one so innocent and fair to wed an ungrateful, disobedient son. But this evening I met her, unexpectedly, at the vicar's, an excellent man, from whom I have learned much; whose precepts, whose example, whose delight in his home, and his life at once active and serene, are in harmony with my own dreams when I dream of her.

"I will tell you the name of the beloved—hold, it is as yet a profound secret between you and me. But oh for the day when I may hear you call her by that name, and print on her forehead the only kiss by man of which I should not be jealous.

"It is Sunday, and after the evening service it is my friend's custom to gather his children round him, and, without any formal sermon or discourse, engage their interest in subjects har-

monious to associations with the sanctity of the day; often not directly bearing upon religion; more often, indeed, playfully starting from some little incident or some slight story-book which had amused the children in the course of the past week, and then gradually winding into reference to some sweet moral precept or illustration from some divine example. It is a maxim with him that, while much that children must learn they can only learn well through conscious labor, and as positive task-work, yet Religion should be connected in their minds, not with labor and task-work, but should become insensibly infused into their habits of thought, blending itself with memories and images of peace and love; with the indulgent tenderness of the earliest teachers, the sinless mirthfulness of the earliest home; with consolation in after sorrows, support through after trials, and never parting company with its twin sister, Hope.

"I entered the vicar's room this evening just as the group had collected round him. By the side of his wife sat a lady in whom I feel a keen interest. Her face wears that kind of calm which speaks of the lassitude bequeathed by sorrow. She is the aunt of my beloved one. Lily had nestled herself on a low ottoman, at the good pastor's feet, with one of his little girls, round whose shoulder she had wound her arm. She is much more fond of the companionship of children than that of girls of her own age. The vicar's wife, a very clever woman once, in my hearing, took her to task for this preference, asking her why she persisted in grouping herself with mere infants who could teach her nothing? Ah! could you have seen the innocent, angel-like expression of her face when she answered simply, 'I suppose because with them I feel safer, I mean nearer to God.'

"Mr. Emlyn—that is the name of the vicar—deduced his homily this evening from a pretty fairy tale which Lily had been telling to his children the day before, and which he drew her on to repeat.

"Take, in brief, the substance of the story:—

"'Once on a time, a king and queen made themselves very unhappy because they had no heir to their throne; and they prayed for one; and lo, on some bright summer morning, the Queen, waking from sleep, saw a cradle beside her bed, and in the cradle a beautiful sleeping babe. Great day throughout the kingdom! But as the infant grew up, it became very wayward and fretful; it lost its beauty, it would not learn its lessons, it was as naughty as a child could be. The parents were very sorrowful; the heir, so longed for, promised to be a great plague to themselves and their subjects. At last one day, to add to their trouble, two little bumps appeared on the Prince's shoulders. All the doctors were consulted as to the cause and the cure of this deformity. Of course they tried the effect of back-bands and steel machines, which gave the poor little Prince great pain, and made him more unamiable than ever. The bumps, nevertheless, grew larger, and as they increased, so the Prince sickened and pined away. At last a skilful surgeon proposed, as the only chance of saving the Prince's life, that the bumps should be cut out, and the next morning was fixed for that operation. But at night the Queen saw, or dreamed she saw, a beautiful shape standing by her bed-side. And it said to her reproachfully, 'Ungrateful woman! How wouldst thou repay me for the precious boon that my favor bestowed on thee? In me behold the Queen of the Fairies. For the heir to thy kingdom, I consigned to thy charge an infant from Fairyland, to become a blessing to thee and to thy people; and thou wouldst inflict upon it a death of torture by the surgeon's knife.' And the Queen answered: 'Precious indeed thou mayest call the boon! A miserable, sickly, feverish changeling.'

"'Art thou so dull,' said the beautiful visitant, 'as not to comprehend that the earliest instincts of the fairy child would be those of discontent, at the exile from its native home? and in that discontent it would have pined itself to death, or grown up, soured and malignant, a fairy still in its power, but a fairy of wrath and evil, had not the strength of its inborn nature sufficed to develop the growth of its wings. That which thy blindness condemns as the deformity of the human-born, is to the fairy-born the crowning perfection of its beauty. Woe to thee, if thou suffer not the wings of the fairy child to grow.'

"'And the next morning the Queen sent away the surgeon when he came with his horrible knife, and removed the backboard and the steel machines from the Prince's shoulders, though all the doctors predicted that the child

would die. And from that moment the royal heir began to recover bloom and health. And when at last, out of those deforming bumps, budded delicately forth the plumage of snow-white wings, the wayward peevishness of the Prince gave place to sweet temper. Instead of scratching his teachers, he became the quickest and most docile of pupils, grew up to be the joy of his parents and the pride of their people; and the people said, 'In him we shall have hereafter such a king as we have never yet known.'

"Here ended Lily's tale. I cannot convey to you a notion of the pretty, playful manner in which it was told. Then she said, with a grave shake of the head, 'But you do not seem to know what happened afterwards. Do you suppose that the Prince never made use of his wings? Listen to me. It was discovered by the courtiers who attended on His Royal Highness that on certain nights, every week, he disappeared. In fact, on these nights, obedient to the instinct of the wings, he flew from palace halls into Fairyland; coming back thence all the more lovingly disposed towards the human home from which he had escaped for awhile.'

"'Oh, my children,' interposed the preacher earnestly, 'the wings would be given to us in vain if we did not obey the instinct which allures us to soar; vain, no less, would be the soaring, were it not towards the home whence we came, bearing back from its native airs a stronger health, and a serener joy; more reconciled to the duties of earth by every new flight into heaven.'

"As he thus completed the moral of Lily's fairy tale, the girl rose from her low seat, took his hand, kissed it reverently, and walked away towards the window. I could see that she was affected even to tears, which she sought to conceal. Later in the evening, when we were dispersed on the lawn, for a few minutes before the party broke up, Lily came to my side timidly and said, in a low whisper:

"'Are you angry with me? what have I done to displease you?'

"'Angry with you; displeased? How can you think of me so unjustly?'

"'It is so many days since you have called, since I have seen you,' she said so artlessly, looking up at me with eyes in which tears still seemed to tremble.

"Before I could trust myself to reply, her aunt approached, and noticing me with a cold and distant 'Good-night,' lead away her niece.

"I had calculated on walking back to their home with them, as I generally have done when we met at another house. But the aunt had probably conjectured I might be at the vicarage that evening, and in order to frustrate my intention, had engaged a carriage for their return. No doubt she has been warned against permitting further intimacy with her niece.

"My father, I must come to you at once, discharge my promise, and receive from your own lips your consent to my choice; for you will consent, will you not? But I wish you to be prepared beforehand, and I shall therefore put up these disjointed fragments of my commune with my own heart and with yours, and post them to-morrow. Expect me to follow them, after leaving you a day free to consider them alone—alone, my dear father; they are meant for no eye but yours.

"K. C."

CHAPTER VI.

The next day Kenelm walked into the town, posted his voluminous letter to Sir Peter, and then looked in at the shop of Will Somers, meaning to make some purchases of basket work or trifling fancy goods in Jessie's pretty store of such articles, that might please the taste of his mother.

On entering the shop his heart beat quicker. He saw two young forms bending over the counter, examining the contents of a glass case. One of these customers was Clemmy; in the other there was no mistaking the slight graceful shape of Lily Mordaunt. Clemmy was exclaiming, "Oh, it is so pretty, Mrs. Somers; but," turning her eyes from the counter to a silk purse in her had, she added sorrowfully, "I can't buy it. I have not got enough, not by a great deal."

"And what is it, Miss Clemmy?" asked Kenelm.

The two girls turned round at his voice, and Clemmy's face brightened.

"Look here," she said, "is it not too lovely?"

The object thus admired and coveted was a

little gold locket, enriched by a cross composed of small pearls.

"I assure you, miss," said Jessie, who had acquired all the coaxing arts of her trade, "it is really a great bargain. Miss Mary Burrows, who was here just before you came, bought one not nearly so pretty, and gave ten shillings more for it."

Miss Mary Burrows was the same age as Miss Clementina Emlyn, and there was a rivalry as to smartness between those youthful beauties. "Miss Burrows!" sighed Clemmy very scornfully.

But Kenelm's attention was distracted from Clemmy's locket to a little ring which Lily had been persuaded by Mrs. Somers to try on, and which she now drew off and returned with a shake of the head. Mrs. Somers, who saw that she had small chance of selling the locket to Clemmy, was now addressing herself to the elder girl more likely to have sufficient pocket-money, and whom, at all events, it was quite safe to trust.

"The ring fits you so nicely, Miss Mordaunt, and every young lady of your age wears at least one ring; allow me to put it up?" She added in a lower voice, "Though we only sell the articles in this case on commission, it is all the same to us whether we are paid now or at Christmas."

"'Tis no use tempting me, Mrs. Somers," said Lily, laughing, and then with a grave air, "I promised Lion, I mean my guardian, never to run into debt, and I never will."

Lily turned resolutely from the perilous counter, taking up a paper that contained a new ribbon she had bought for Blanche, and Clemmy reluctantly followed her out of the shop.

Kenelm lingered behind and selected very hastily a few trifles, to be sent to him that evening with some specimens of basket-work left to Will's tasteful discretion; then purchased the locket on which Clemmy had set her heart; but all the while his thoughts were fixed on the ring which Lily had tried on. It was no sin against etiquette to give the locket to a child like Clemmy, but would it not be a cruel impertinence to offer a gift to Lily?

Jessie spoke:

"Miss Mordaunt took a great fancy to this ring, Mr. Chillingly. I am sure her aunt would like her to have it. I have a great mind to put it by on the chance of Mrs. Cameron's calling here. It would be a pity if it were bought by some one else."

"I think," said Kenelm, "that I will take the liberty of showing it to Mrs. Cameron. No doubt she will buy it for her niece. Add the price of it to my bill." He seized the ring and carried it off; a very poor little simple ring, with a single stone, shaped as a heart, not half the price of the locket.

Kenelm rejoined the young ladies just where the path split into two, the one leading direct to Grasmere, the other through the churchyard to the Vicarage. He presented the locket to Clemmy with brief kindly words which easily removed any scruple she might have had in accepting it; and, delighted with her acquisition, she bounded off to the Vicarage, impatient to show the prize to her mamma and sisters, and more especially to Miss Mary Burrows, who was coming to lunch with them.

Kenelm walked on slowly by Lily's side.

"You have a good heart, Mr. Chillingly," said she, somewhat abruptly. "How it must please you to give such pleasure! Dear little Clemmy!"

This artless praise, and the perfect absence of envy or thought of self evinced by her joy that her friend's wish was gratified, though her own was not, enchanted Kenelm.

"If it pleases to give pleasure," said he, "it is your turn to be pleased now; you can confer such pleasure upon me."

"How?" she asked, falteringly, and with quick change of color.

"By conceding to me the same right your little friend has allowed."

And he drew forth the ring.

Lily reared her head with a first impulse of haughtiness. But when her eyes met his the head drooped down again, and a slight shiver ran through her frame.

"Miss Mordaunt," resumed Kenelm, mastering his passionate longing to fall at her feet and say, "But, oh! in this ring it is my love that I offer—it is my troth that I pledge!" "Miss Mordaunt, spare me the misery of thinking that I have offended you; least of all would I do so on this day, for it may be some little while before I see you again. I am going home for a few days upon a matter which may affect the happiness of my life, and on which I should be a bad son and an un-

worthy gentleman if I did not consult him who, in all that concerns my affections, has trained me to turn to him, the father; in all that concerns my honor to him, the gentleman."

A speech more unlike that which any delineator of manners and morals in the present day would put into the mouth of a lover, no critic in 'The Londoner' could ridicule. But, somehow or other, this poor little tamer of butterflies and teller of fairy tales comprehended on the instant all that this most eccentric of human beings thus frigidly left untold. Into her innermost heart it sank more deeply than would the most ardent declaration put into the lips of the boobies or the scamps in whom delineators of manners in the present day too often debase the magnificent chivalry embodied in the name of 'Lover.'

Where these two had, while speaking, halted on the path along the brookside, there was a bench, on which it so happened that they had seated themselves weeks before. A few moments later on that bench they were seated again.

And the trumpery little ring with its turquoise heart was on Lily's finger, and there they continued to sit for nearly half-an-hour; not talking much, but wondrously happy; not a single vow of troth interchanged. No, not even a word that could be construed into "I love." And yet when they rose from the bench, and went silently along the brookside, each knew that the other was beloved.

When they reached the gate that admitted into the garden of Grasmere, Kenelm made a slight start. Mrs. Cameron was leaning over the gate. Whatever alarm at the appearance Kenelm might have felt was certainly not shared by Lily; she advanced lightly before him, kissed her aunt on the cheek, and passed on across the lawn with a bound in her step and the carol of a song upon her lips.

Kenelm remained by the gate, face to face with Mrs. Cameron. She opened the gate, put her arm in his, and led him back along the brookside.

"I am sure, Mr. Chillingly," she said, "that you will not impute to my words any meaning more grave than that which I wish them to convey, when I remind you that there is no place too obscure to escape from the ill-nature of gossip, and you must own that my niece incurs the chance of its notice if she be seen walking alone in these by-paths with a man of your age and position, and whose sojourn in the neighborhood, without any ostensible object or motive, has already begun to excite conjecture. I do not for a moment assume that you regard my niece in any other light than that of an artless child, whose originality of tastes or fancy may serve to amuse you; and still less do I suppose that she is in danger of misrepresenting any attentions on your part. But for her sake I am bound to consider what others may say. Excuse me then if I add that I think you are also bound in honor and in good feeling to do the same. Mr. Chillingly, it would give me a great sense of relief if it suited your plans to move from the neighborhood."

"My dear Mrs. Cameron," answered Kenelm, who has listened to this speech with imperturbable calm of visage; "I thank you much for your candor, and I am glad to have this opportunity of informing you that I am about to move from this neighborhood, with the hope of returning to it in a very few days and rectifying your mistake as to the point of view in which I regard your niece. In a word," here the expression of his countenance and the tone of his voice underwent a sudden change, "it is the dearest wish of my heart to be empowered by my parents to assure you of the warmth with which they will welcome your niece as their daughter, should she deign to listen to my suit and intrust me with the charge of her happiness."

Mrs. Cameron stopped short, gazing into his face with a look of inexpressible dismay.

"No! Mr. Chillingly," she exclaimed, "this must not be—cannot be. Put out of your mind an idea so wild. A young man's senseless romance. Your parents cannot consent to your union with my niece; I tell you beforehand they cannot."

"But why?" said Kenelm, with a slight smile, and not much impressed by the vehemence of Mrs. Cameron's adjuration.

"Why?" she repeated passionately; and then recovering something of her habitual weariness of quiet. "The why is easily explained. Mr. Kenelm Chillingly is the heir of a very ancient house and, I am told, of considerable estates. Lily Mordaunt is a nobody, an orphan, without fortune, without connection, the ward of a humbly born artist, to whom she owes the roof

that shelters her; she is without the ordinary education of a gentlewoman; she has seen nothing of the world in which you move. Your parents have not the right to allow a son so young as yourself to throw himself out of his proper sphere by a rash and imprudent alliance. And, never would I consent, never would Walter Melville consent, to her entering into any family reluctant to receive her. There—that is enough. Dismiss the notion so lightly entertained. And farewell."

"Madam," answered Kenelm very earnestly, "believe me, that had I not entertained the hope approaching to conviction that the reasons you urge against my presumption will not have the weight with my parents which you ascribe to them, I should not have spoken to you thus frankly. Young though I be, still I might fairly claim the right to choose for myself in marriage. But I gave to my father a very binding promise that I would not formally propose to any one till I had acquainted him with my desire to do so, and obtained his approval of my choice; and he is the last man in the world who would withhold that approval where my heart is set on it as it is now. I want no fortune with a wife, and should I ever care to advance my position in the world, no connection could help me like the approving smile of the woman I love. There is but one qualification which my parents would deem they had the right to exact from my choice of one who is to bear our name. I mean that she should have the appearance, the manners, the principles—and my mother at least might add—the birth of a gentlewoman. Well, as to appearance and manners, I have seen much of fine society from my boyhood, and found no one among the highest born who can excel the exquisite refinement of every look, and the inborn delicacy of every thought, in her of whom, if mine, I shall be as proud as I shall be fond. As to defects in the frippery and tinsel of a boarding-school education, they are very soon remedied. Remains only the last consideration—birth. Mrs. Braefield informs me that you have assured her that, though circumstances into which as yet I have no right to inquire, have made her the ward of a man of humble origin, Miss Mordaunt is of gentle birth. Do you deny that?"

"No," said Mrs. Cameron, hesitating, but with a flash of pride in her eyes as she went on. "No. I cannot deny that my niece is descended from those who, in point of birth, were not unequal to your own ancestors. But what of that?" she added, with a bitter despondency of tone. "Equality of birth ceases when one falls into poverty, obscurity, neglect, nothingness!"

"Really this is a morbid habit on your part. But since we have thus spoken so confidentially, will you not empower me to answer the question which will probably be put to me, and the answer to which will, I doubt not, remove every obstacle in the way of my happiness. Whatever the reasons which might very sufficiently induce you to preserve, whilst living so quietly in this place, a discreet silence as to the parentage of Miss Mordaunt and your own—and I am well aware that those whom altered circumstances of fortune have compelled to altered modes of life, may disdain to parade to strangers the pretensions to a higher station than that to which they reconcile their habits—whatever, I say, such reasons for silence to strangers, should they preclude you from confiding to me, an aspirant to your niece's hand, a secret which, after all, cannot be concealed from her future husband?"

"From her future husband? of course not," answered Mrs. Cameron. "But I decline to be questioned by one whom I may never see again, and of whom I know so little. I decline, indeed, to assist in removing any obstacle to an union with my niece, which I hold to be in every way unsuited to either party. I have no cause even to believe that my niece would accept you if you were free to propose to her. You have not, I presume, spoken to her as an aspirant to her hand. You have not addressed to her any declaration of your attachment, or sought to extract from her inexperience any words that warrant you in thinking that her heart will break if she never sees you again."

"I do not merit such cruel and taunting questions," said Kenelm, indignantly. "But I will say no more now. When we again meet let me hope you will treat me less unkindly. Adieu!"

"Stay, sir. A word or two more. You persist in asking your father and Lady Chillingly to consent to your proposal to Miss Mordaunt?"

"Certainly I do."

"And you will promise me, on your word as

a gentleman, to state fairly all the causes which might fairly operate against their consent; the poverty, the humble rearing, the imperfect education of my niece; so that they might not hereafter say you had entrapped their consent, and avenge themselves for your deceit by contempt for her?"

"Ah, madam, madam, you really try my patience too far. But take my promise, if you can hold that of value from one whom you can suspect of deliberate deceit."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Chillingly. Bear with my rudeness. I have been so taken by surprise, I scarcely know what I am saying. But let us understand each other completely before we part. If your parents withhold their consent you will communicate it to me; me only, not to Lily. I repeat I know nothing of the state of her affections. But it might embitter any girl's life to be led on to love one whom she could not marry."

"It shall be as you say. But if they do consent?"

"Then you will speak to me before you seek an interview with Lily, for then comes another question: Will her guardian consent?—and—and——"

"And what?"

"No matter. I rely on your honor in this request, as in all else. Good day."

She turned back with hurried footsteps, muttering to herself, "But they will not consent. Heaven grant that they will not consent, or if they do, what—what is to be said or done? Oh, that Walter Melville were here, or that I knew where to write to him!"

On his way back to Cromwell Lodge, Kenelm was overtaken by the vicar.

"I was coming to you, my dear Mr. Chillingly, first to thank you for the very pretty present with which you have gladdened the heart of my little Clemmy, and next to ask you to come with me quietly to-day to meet Mr. ——, the celebrated antiquarian, who came to Moleswich this morning at my request, to examine that old Gothic tomb in our churchyard. Only think,—though he cannot read the inscription any better than we can, he knows all about its history. It seems that a young knight renowned for feats of valor in the reign of Henry IV. married a daughter of one of those great Earls of Montfichet who were then the most powerful family in these parts. He was slain in defending the church from an assault by some disorderly rioters of the Lollard faction; he fell on the very spot where the tomb is now placed. That accounts for its situation in the churchyard, not within the fabric. Mr. —— discovered this fact in an old memoir of the ancient and once famous family to which the young knight Albert belonged, and which came, alas! to so shameful an end, the Fletwodes, Barons of Fletwode and Malpas. What a triumph over pretty Lily Mordaunt, who always chose to imagine that the tomb must be that of some heroine of her own romantic invention! Do come to dinner; Mr. —— is a most agreeable man, and full of interesting anecdote."

"I am sorry I cannot. I am obliged to return home at once for a few days. That old family of Fletwode! I think I see before me while we speak, the gray tower in which they once held sway; and the last of the race following Mammon along the Progress of the Age—a convicted felon! What a terrible satire on the pride of birth!"

Kenelm left Cromwell Lodge that evening, but he still kept on his apartments there, saying he might be back unexpectedly any day in the course of the next week.

He remained two days in London, wishing all that he had communicated to Sir Peter in writing to sink into his father's heart before a personal appeal to it.

The more he revolved the ungracious manner in which Mrs. Cameron had received his confidence, the less importance he attached to it. An exaggerated sense of disparities of fortune in a person who appeared to him to have the pride so common to those who have known better days, coupled with a nervous apprehension lest his family should ascribe to her any attempt to ensnare a very young man of considerable worldly pretensions into a marriage with a penniless niece, seemed to account for much that had at first perplexed and angered him. And if, as he conjectured, Mrs. Cameron had once held a much higher position in the world than she did now—a conjecture warranted by a certain peculiar conventional undeniable elegance which characterized her habitual manner—and was now, as she implied, actually a dependant on the bounty of a painter who had only just acquired some professional distinction, she might well shrink from the mortification of becoming an object of compassion to her richer

neighbors; nor, when he came to think of it, had he any more right than those neighbors to any confidence as to her own or Lily's parentage, so long as he was not formally entitled to claim admission into her privity.

London seemed to him intolerably dull and wearisome. He called nowhere except at Lady Glenalvon's: he was glad to hear from the servants that she was still at Exmundham. He relied much on the influence of the queen of the Fashion with his mother, whom he knew would be more difficult to persuade than Sir Peter, nor did he doubt that he should win to his side that sympathizing and warm-hearted queen.

CHAPTER VII.

It is somewhere about three weeks since the party invited by Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly assembled at Exmundham, and they are still there, though people invited to a country house have seldom compassion enough for the dulness of its owner to stay more than three days. Mr. Chillingly Mivers, indeed, had not exceeded that orthordox limit. Quietly observant, during his stay, of young Gordon's manner towards Cacilia, and hers towards him, he had satisfied himself that there was no cause to alarm Sir Peter, or induce the worthy baronet to regret the invitation he had given to that clever kinsman. For all the visitors remaining, Exmundham had a charm.

To Lady Glenalvon, because in the hostess she met her most familiar friend when both were young girls, and because it pleased her to note the interest Cecilia Travers took in the place so associated with memories of the man to whom it was Lady Glenalvon's hope to see her united. To Gordon Chillingly, because no opportunity could be so favorable for his own well-concealed designs on the hand and heart of the heiress. To the heiress herself the charm needs no explanation.

To Leopold Travers the attractions of Exmundham were unquestionably less fascinating. Still even he was well pleased to prolong his stay. His active mind found amusement in wandering over an estate the acreage of which would have warranted a much larger rental, and lecturing Sir Peter on the old-fashioned system of husbandry which that good-natured easy proprietor permitted his tenants to adopt, as well as on the number of superfluous hands that were employed on the pleasure-grounds and in the general management of the estate, such as carpenters, sawyers, woodmen, bricklayers, and smiths.

When the squire said, "You could do just as well with a third of those costly dependants," Sir Peter, unconsciously plagiarizing the answer of the old French grand seigneur, replied, "Very likely. But the question is, could the rest do just as well without me?"

Exmundham, indeed, was a very expensive place to keep up. The house, built by some ambitious Chillingly three centuries ago, would have been large for an owner of thrice the revenues; and though the flower-garden was smaller than that at Braefieldville, there were paths and drives through miles of young plantations and old woodlands that furnished lazy occupation to an army of laborers. No wonder that, despite his nominal ten thousand a-year, Sir Peter was far from being a rich man. Exmundham devoured at least half the rental. The active mind of Leopold Travers also found ample occupation in the stores of his host's extensive library. Travers, never much of a reader, was by no means a despiser of learning, and he soon took to historical and archæological researches with the ardor of a man who must always throw energy into any pursuit that occasion presents as an escape from indolence. Indolent, Leopold Travers never could be. But, more than either of these resources of occupation, the companionship of Chillingly Gordon excited his interest and quickened the current of his thoughts. Always fond of renewing his own youth in the society of the young, and of the sympathizing temperament which belongs to cordial natures, he had, as we have seen, entered very heartily into the ambition of George Belvoir, and reconciled himself very pliably to the humors of Kenelm Chillingly. But the first of these two was a little too commonplace, the second a little too eccentric to enlist the complete good-fellowship which, being alike very clever and very practical, Leopold Travers established with that very clever and very practical representative of the rising generation, Chillingly Gordon. Between them there was this meeting ground, political and worldly, a great contempt for innocuous old-fashioned notions; added to

which, in the mind of Leopold Travers, was a contempt—which would have been complete, but that the contempt admitted dread—of harmful new-fashioned notions which, interpreted by his thoughts, threatened ruin to his country and downfall to the follies of existent society, and which, interpreted by his language, tamed itself into the man of the world's phrase, "Going too far for me." Notions which, by the much more cultivated intellect and the immeasurably more soaring ambition of Chillingly Gordon, might be viewed and criticised thus: "Could I accept these doctrines? I don't see my way to being Prime Minister of a country in which religion and capital are still powers to be consulted. And, putting aside religion and capital, I don't see how, if these doctrines passed into law, with a good coat on my back I should not be a sufferer. Either I, as having a good coat, should have it torn off my back as a capitalist, or, if I remonstrated in the name of moral honesty, be put to death as a religionist."

Therefore when Leopold Travers said, "Of course we must go on," Chillingly Gordon smiled and answered, "Certainly, go on." And when Leopold Travers added, "But we may go too far," Chillingly Gordon shook his head, and replied, "How true that is! Certainly, too far."

Apart from the congeniality of political sentiment, there were other points of friendly contact between the older and younger man. Each was an exceedingly pleasant man of the world; and, though Leopold Travers could not have plumbed certain deeps in Chillingly Gordon's nature—and in every man's nature there are deeps which his ablest observer cannot fathom—yet he was not wrong when he said to himself, "Gordon is a gentleman."

Utterly would my readers misconceive that very clever young man, if they held him to be a hypocrite like Blifil or Joseph Surface. Chillingly Gordon, in every private sense of the word, was a gentleman. If he had staked his whole fortune on a rubber at whist, and an undetected glance at his adversary's hand would have made the difference between loss and gain, he would have turned away his head and said, "Hold up your cards." Neither, as I have had occasion to explain before, was he actuated by any motive in common with the vulgar fortune-hunter in his secret resolve to win the hand of the heiress. He recognized no inequality of worldly gifts between them. He said to himself, "Whatever she may give me in money, I shall amply repay in worldly position if I succeed, and succeed I certainly shall. If I were as rich as Lord Westminster, and still cared about being Prime Minister, I should select her as the most fitting woman I have seen for a Prime Minister's wife."

It must be acknowledged that this sort of self-commune, if not that of a very ardent lover, is very much that of a sensible man setting high value on himself, bent on achieving the prizes of a public career, and desirous of securing in his wife a woman who would adorn the station to which he confidently aspired. In fact, no one so able as Chillingly Gordon would ever have conceived the ambition of being Minister of England if, in all that, in private life, constitutes the English gentleman, he could be fairly subject to reproach.

He was but in public life what many a gentleman honest in private life has been before him, an ambitious, resolute egotist, by no means without personal affections, but holding them all subordinate to the objects of personal ambition, and with no more of other principle than that of expediency in reference to his own career, than would cover a silver penny. But expediency in itself he deemed the statesman's only rational principle. And to the consideration of expediency he brought a very unprejudiced intellect, quite fitted to decide whether the public opinion of a free and enlightened people was for turning St. Paul's Cathedral into an Agapemone or not.

During the summer weeks he had thus vouchsafed to the turfs and groves of Exmundham, Leopold Travers was not the only person whose good opinion Chillingly Gordon had ingratiated. He had won the warmest approbation from Mrs. Campion. His conversation reminded her of that which she had enjoyed in the house of her departed spouse. In talking with Cecilia she was fond of contrasting him to Kenelm, not to the favor of the latter, whose humors she utterly failed to understand, and whom she pertinaciously described as "so affected." "A most superior young man Mr. Gordon, so well informed, so sensible, above all, so natural." Such was her judgment upon the unavowed candidate to Cecilia's hand; and Mrs. Campion required no

avowal to divine the candidature. Even Lady Glenalvon had begun to take friendly interest in the fortunes of this promising young man. Most women can sympathize with youthful ambition. He impressed her with a deep conviction of his abilities, and still more with respect for their concentration upon practical objects of power and renown. She too, like Mrs. Campion, began to draw comparisons unfavorable to Kenelm between the two cousins; the one who seemed so slothfully determined to hide his candle under a bushel, the other so honestly disposed to set his light before men. She felt also annoyed and angry that Kenelm was thus absenting himself from the paternal home at the very time of her first visit to it, and when he had so felicitous an opportunity of seeing more of the girl in whom he knew that Lady Glenalvon deemed he might win, if he would properly woo, the wife that would best suit him. So that when one day Mrs. Campion, walking through the gardens alone with Lady Glenalvon, while from the gardens into the park went Chillingly Gordon, arm-in-arm with Leopold Travers, abruptly asked, "Don't you think that Mr. Gordon is smitten with Cecilia, though he, with his moderate fortune, does not dare to say so? And don't you think that any girl, if she were as rich as Cecilia will be, would be more proud of such a husband as Chillingly Gordon than of some silly Earl?"

Lady Glenalvon answered curtly, but somewhat sorrowfully—

"Yes."

After a pause, she added, "There *is* a man with whom I did once think she would have been happier than with any other. One man who ought to be dearer to me than Mr. Gordon, for he saved the life of my son, and who, though perhaps less clever than Mr. Gordon, still has a great deal of talent within him, which might come forth and make him—what shall I say?—a useful and distinguished member of society, if married to a girl so sure of raising any man she marries as Cecilia Travers. But if I am to renounce that hope, and look through the range of young men brought under my notice, I don't know one, putting aside consideration of rank and fortune, I should prefer for a clever daughter who went heart and soul with the ambition of a clever man. But, Mrs. Campion, I have not yet quite renounced my hope; and, unless I do, I yet think there is one man to whom I would rather give Cecilia, if she were my daughter."

Therewith Lady Glenalvon so decidedly broke off the subject of conversation, that Mrs. Campion could not have renewed it without such a breach of the female etiquette of good breeding as Mrs. Campion was the last person to adventure.

Lady Chillingly could not help being pleased with Gordon. He was light in hand, served to amuse her guests, and made up a rubber of whist in case of need.

There were two persons, however, with whom Gordon made no ground, viz., Parson John and Sir Peter. When Travers praised him one day, for the solidity of his parts and the soundness of his judgment, the Parson replied snappishly, "Yes, solid and sound as one of those tables you buy at a broker's; the thickness of the varnish hides the defects in the joints; the whole frame-work is rickety." But when the Parson was indignantly urged to state the reason by which he arrived at so harsh a conclusion, he could only reply by an assertion which seemed to his questioner a declamatory burst of parsonic intolerance.

"Because," said Parson John, "he has no love for man, and no reverence for God. And no character is sound and solid which enlarges its surface at the expenses of its supports."

On the other hand, the favor with which Sir Peter had at first regarded Gordon gradually vanished, in proportion as, acting on the hint Mivers had originally thrown out but did not deem it necessary to repeat, he watched the pains which the young man took to insinuate himself into the good graces of Mr. Travers and Mrs. Campion, and the artful and half-suppressed gallantry of his manner to the heiress.

Perhaps Gordon had not ventured thus "to feel his way" till after Mivers had departed; or perhaps Sir Peter's parental anxiety rendered him, in this instance, a shrewder observer than was the man of the world, whose natural acuteness was, in matters of affection, not unfrequently rendered languid by his acquired philosophy of indifferentism.

More and more every day, every hour, of her sojourn beneath his roof, did Cecilia become dearer to Sir Peter, and stronger and stronger became his wish to secure her for his daughter-

in-law. He was inexpressibly flattered by her preference for his company; ever at hand to share his customary walks, his kindly visits to the cottages of peasants, or the homesteads of petty tenants; wherein both were sure to hear many a simple anecdote of Master Kenelm in his childhood, anecdotes of whim or good nature, of considerate pity or reckless courage.

Thoughout all these varieties of thought or feeling in the social circle around her, Lady Chillingly preserved the unmoved calm of her dignified position. A very good woman certainly, and very ladylike. No one could detect a flaw in her character, or a fold awry in her flounce. She was only like the gods of Epicurus, too good to trouble her serene existence with the cares of us simple mortals. Not that she was without a placid satisfaction in the tribute which the world laid upon her altars; nor was she so supremely goddess-like as to soar above the household affections which humanity entails on the dwellers and denizens of earth. She liked her husband as much as most elderly wives like their elderly husbands. She bestowed upon Kenelm a liking somewhat more warm, and mingled with compassion. His eccentricities would have puzzled her, if she had allowed herself to be puzzled; it troubled her less to pity them. She did not share her husband's desire for his union with Cecilia. She thought that her son would have a higher place in the county if he married Lady Jane, the Duke of Clanville's daughter; and "that is what he ought to do," said Lady Chillingly to herself. She entertained none of the fear that had induced Sir Peter to extract from Kenelm the promise not to pledge his hand before he had received his father's consent. That the son of Lady Chillingly should make a *mésalliance*, however crotchety he might be in other respects, was a thought that it would have so disturbed her to admit, that she did not admit it.

Such was the condition of things at Exmundham, when the lengthy communication of Kenelm reached Sir Peter's hands.

BOOK EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I.

NEVER in his whole life had the mind of Sir Peter been so agitated as it was during, and after, the perusal of Kenelm's flighty composition. He had received it at the breakfast-table, and, opening it eagerly, ran his eye hastily over the contents, till he very soon arrived at sentences which appalled him. Lady Chillingly, who was fortunately busied at the tea-urn, did not observe the dismay on his countenance. It was visible only to Cecilia and to Gordon. Neither guessed who that letter was from.

"Not bad news, I hope," said Cecilia, softly.

"Bad news," echoed Sir Peter. "No, my dear, no; a letter on business. It seems terribly long," and he thrust the packet into his pocket, muttering "see to it by-and-by."

"That slovenly farmer of yours, Mr. Nostock, has failed, I suppose," said Mr. Travers, looking up and observing a quiver on his host's lip. "I told you he would—a fine farm too. Let me choose you another tenant."

Sir Peter shook his head with a wan smile.

"Nostock will not fail. There have been six generations of Nostocks on the farm."

"So I should guess," said Travers, drily.

"And—and," faltered Sir Peter, "if the last of the race fails, he must lean upon me, and—if one of the two break down—it shall not be——"

"Shall not be that cross-cropping blockhead, my dear Sir Peter. This is carrying benevolence too far."

Here the tact and *savoir vivre* of Chillingly Gordon came to the rescue of the host. Possessing himself of the 'Times' newspaper, he uttered an exclamation of surprise, genuine or simulated, and read aloud an extract from the leading article, announcing an impending change in the Cabinet."

As soon as he could quit the breakfast-table, Sir Peter hurried into his library and there gave himself up to the study of Kenelm's unwelcome communication. The task took him long, for he stopped at intervals, overcome by the struggle of his heart, now melted into sympathy with the passionate eloquence of a son hitherto so free from amorous romance, and now sorrowing for the ruin of his own cherished hopes. This uneducated country girl would never be such a helpmate to a man like Kenelm as would have been Cecilia Travers. At length, having finished the letter, he buried his head between his clasped hands, and tried hard to realize the situation that placed the father and son into such direct antagonism.

"But," he murmured, "after all it is the boy's happiness that must be consulted. If he will not be happy in my way, what right have I to say that he shall not be happy in his?"

Just then Cecilia came softly into the room. She had acquired the privilege of entering his library at will, sometimes to choose a book of his recommendation, sometimes to direct and seal his letters—Sir Peter was grateful to any one who saved him an extra trouble—and sometimes, especially at this hour, to decoy him forth into his wonted constitutional walk.

He lifted his face at the sound of her approaching tread and her winning voice, and the face was so sad that the tears rushed to her eyes on seeing it. She laid her hand on his shoulder, and said pleadingly, "Dear Sir Peter, what is it—what is it?"

"Ah—ah, my dear," said Sir Peter, gathering up the scattered sheets of Kenelm's effusion with hurried, trembling hands. "Don't ask—don't talk of it; 'tis but one of the disappointments that all of us must undergo, when we invest our hopes in the uncertain will of others."

Then, observing that the tears were trickling down the girl's fair, pale cheeks, he took her hand in both his, kissed her forehead, and said, whisperingly, "Pretty one, how good you have been to me! Heaven bless you. What a wife you will be to some man!"

Thus saying, he shambled out of the room through the open casement. She followed him impulsively, wonderingly; but before she reached his side he turned round, waved his hand with a gently repelling gesture, and went his way alone through dense fir groves which had been planted in honor of Kenelm's birth.

CHAPTER II.

KENELM arrived at Exmundham just in time to dress for dinner. His arrival was not unexpected, for the morning after his father had received his communication, Sir Peter had said to Lady Chillingly "that he had heard from Kenelm to the effect that he might be down any day."

"Quite time he should come," said Lady Chillingly. "Have you his letter about you?"

"No, my dear Caroline. Of course he sends you his kindest love, poor fellow."

"Why poor fellow? Has he been ill?"

"No; but there seems to be something on his mind. If so we must do what we can to relieve it. He is the best of sons, Caroline."

"I am sure I have nothing to say against him, except," added her Ladyship, reflectively, "that I do wish he were a little more like other young men."

"Hum—like Chillingly Gordon, for instance?"

"Well, yes; Mr. Gordon is a remarkably well-bred, sensible young man. How different from that disagreeable, bearish father of his, who went to law with you!"

"Very different indeed, but with just as much of the Chillingly blood in him. How the Chillinglys ever gave birth to a Kenelm is a question much more puzzling."

"Oh, my dear Sir Peter, don't be metaphysical. You know how I hate puzzles."

"And yet, Caroline, I have to thank you for a puzzle which I can never interpret by my brain. There are a great many puzzles in human nature which can only be interpreted by the heart."

"Very true," said Lady Chillingly. "I suppose Kenelm is to have his old room, just opposite to Mr. Gordon's?"

"Ay—ay, just opposite. Opposite they will be all their lives. Only think, Coroline, I have made a discovery!"

"Dear me; I hope not. Your discoveries are generally very expensive, and bring us in contact with such very odd people."

"This discovery shall not cost us a penny, and I don't know any people so odd as not to comprehend it. Briefly it is this: To genius the first requisite is heart; it is no requisite at all to talent. My dear Caroline, Gordon has as much talent as any young man I know, but he wants the first requisite of genius. I am not by any means sure that Kenelm has genius, but there is no doubt that he has the first requisite of genius—heart. Heart is a very perplexing, wayward, irrational thing; and that perhaps accounts for the general incapacity to comprehend genius, while any fool can comprehend talent. My dear Caroline, you know that it is very seldom, not more than once in three years, that I presume to have a will of my own against a will of yours; but should there come a question in which our son's heart is concerned, then (speaking between ourselves) my will must govern yours."

"Sir Peter is growing more odd every day," said Lady Chillingly to herself when left alone. "But he does not mean ill, and there are worse husbands in the world."

Therewith she rang for her maid, gave requisite orders for the preparing of Kenelm's room, which had not been slept in for many months, and then consulted that functionary as to the adaptation of some dress of hers, too costly to be laid aside, to the style of some dress less costly which Lady Glenalvon had imported from Paris as *la dernière mode.*

On the very day on which Kenelm arrived at Exmundham, Chillingly Gordon had received this letter from Mr. Gerard Danvers:

"DEAR GORDON,—In the ministerial changes announced as rumor in the public papers, and which you may accept as certain, that sweet little cherub * * * is to be sent to sit up aloft and pray there for the life of poor Jack—viz., of the government he leaves below. In accepting the peerage, which I persuaded him to do, * * * creates a vacancy for the borough of ——, just the place for you, far better in every way than Sax-

borough. * * * promises to recommend you to his committee. Come to town at once.—Yours, etc,

"G. DANVERS."

Gordon showed this letter to Mr. Travers, and, on receiving the hearty good wishes of that gentleman, said, with emotion partly genuine partly assumed, "You cannot guess all that the realization of your good wishes would be. Once in the House of Commons, and my motives for action are so strong that—do not think me very conceited if I count upon Parliamentary success."

"My dear Gordon, I am as certain of your success as I am of my own existence."

"Should I succeed—should the great prizes of public life be within my reach—should I lift myself into a position that would warrant my presumption, do you think I could come to you and say, 'There is an object of ambition dearer to me than power and office—the hope of attaining which was the strongest of all my motives of action? And in that hope shall I also have the good wishes of the father of Cecilia Travers?'"

"My dear fellow, give me your hand; you speak manfully and candidly as a gentleman should speak. I answer in the same spirit. I don't pretend to say that I have not entertained views for Cecilia which included hereditary rank and established fortune in a suitor to her hand, though I never should have made them imperative conditions. I am neither potentate nor *parvenu* enough for that; and I can never forget" (here every muscle in the man's face twitched) "that I myself married for love, and was so happy. How happy Heaven only knows! Still, if you had thus spoken a few weeks ago, I should not have replied very favorably to your question. But now that I have seen so much of you, my answer is this: If you lose your election—if you don't come into Parliament at all, you have my good wishes all the same. If you win my daughter's heart, there is no man on whom I would more willingly bestow her hand. There she is, by herself too, in the garden. Go and talk to her."

Gordon hesitated. He knew too well that he had not won her heart, though he had no suspicion that it was given to another. And he was much too clever not to know also how much he hazards, who, in affairs of courtship, is premature.

"Ah!" he said, "I cannot express my gratitude for words so generous, encouragement so cheering. But I have never yet dared to utter to Miss Travers a word that would prepare her even to harbor a thought of me as a suitor. And I scarcely think I should have the courage to go through this election with the grief of her rejection on my heart."

"Well, go in and win the election first; meanwhile, at all events, take leave of Cecilia."

Gordon left his friend, and joined Miss Travers, resolved not indeed to risk a formal declaration, but to sound his way to his chances of acceptance.

The interview was very brief. He did sound his way skilfully, and felt it very unsafe for his footsteps. The advantage of having gained the approval of the father was too great to be lost altogether, by one of these decided answers on the part of the daughter which allow of no appeal, especially to a poor gentleman who woos an heiress.

He returned to Travers, and said simply, "I bear with me her good wishes as well as yours. That is all. I leave myself in your kind hands."

Then he hurried away to take leave of his host and hostess, say a few significant words to the ally he had already gained in Mrs. Campion, and within an hour was on his road to London, passing on his way the train that bore Kenelm to Exmundham. Gordon was in high spirits. At least he felt as certain of winning Cecilia as he did of winning his election.

"I have never yet failed in what I desired," said he to himself, "because I have ever taken pains not to fail."

The cause of Gordon's sudden departure created a great excitement in that quiet circle, shared by all except Cecilia and Sir Peter.

CHAPTER III.

KENELM did not see either father or mother till he appeared at dinner. Then he was seated next to Cecilia. There was but little conversation between the two; in fact, the prevalent subject of talk was general and engrossing, the interest in Chillingly Gordon's election; predictions of his success, of what he would do in Parliament. "Where," said Lady Glenalvon, "there is such a dearth of rising young men,

that if he were only half as clever as he is he would be a gain."

"A gain to what?" asked Sir Peter, testily. "To his country? about which I don't believe he cares a brass button."

To this assertion Leopold Travers replied warmly, and was not less warmly backed by Mrs. Campion.

"For my part," said Lady Glenalvon, in conciliatory accents, "I think every able man in Parliament is a gain to the country; and he may not serve his country less effectively because he does not boast of his love for it. The politicians I dread most are those so rampant in France nowadays, the brawling patriots. When Sir Robert Walpole said, 'All those men have their price,' he pointed to the men who called themselves 'patriots.'"

"Bravo!" cried Travers.

"Sir Robert Walpole showed his love for his country by corrupting it. There are many ways besides bribing for corrupting a country," said Kenelm, mildly, and that was Kenelm's sole contribution to the general conversation.

It was not till the rest of the party had retired to rest that the conference, longed for by Kenelm, dreaded by Sir Peter, took place in the library. It lasted deep into the night; both parted with lightened hearts and a fonder affection for each other. Kenelm had drawn so charming a picture of the Fairy, and so thoroughly convinced Sir Peter that his own feelings towards her were those of no passing youthful fancy, but of that love which has its roots in the innermost heart, that though it was still with a sigh, a deep sigh, that he dismissed the thought of Cecilia, Sir Peter did dismiss it; and, taking comfort at last from the positive assurance that Lily was of gentle birth, and the fact that her name of Mordaunt was that of ancient and illustrious houses, said, with half a smile, "It might have been worse, my dear boy. I began to be afraid that, in spite of the teachings of Mivers and Welby, it was 'The Miller's Daughter,' after all. But we still have a difficult task to persuade your poor mother. In covering your first flight from our roof I unluckily put into her head the notion of Lady Jane, a duke's daughter, and the notion has never got out of it. That comes of fibbing."

"I count on Lady Glenalvon's influence on my mother in support of your own," said Kenelm. "If so accepted an oracle in the great world pronounce in my favor, and promise to present my wife at Court and bring her into fashion, I think that my mother will consent to allow us to reset the old family diamonds for her next reappearance in London. And then, too, you can tell her that I will stand for the county. I will go into Parliament, and if I meet there our clever cousin, and find that he does not care a brass button for the country, take my word for it, I will lick him more easily than I licked Tom Bowles."

"Tom Bowles! Who is he?—ah! I remember some letter of yours in which you spoke of a Bowles, whose favorite study was mankind, a moral philosopher."

"Moral philosophers," answered Kenelm, "have so muddled their brains with the alcohol of new ideas that their moral legs have become shaky, and the humane would rather help them to bed than give them a licking. My Tom Bowles is a muscular Christian, who became no less muscular, but much more Christian, after he was licked."

And in this pleasant manner these two oddities settled their conference, and went up to bed with arms wrapt round each other's shoulder.

CHAPTER IV.

Kenelm found it a much harder matter to win Lady Glenalvon to his side than he had anticipated. With the strong interest she had taken in Kenelm's future, she could not but revolt from the idea of his union with an obscure portionless girl whom he had only known a few weeks, and of whose very parentage he seemed to know nothing, save an assurance that she was his equal in birth. And, with the desire, which she had cherished almost as fondly as Sir Peter, that Kenelm might win a bride in every way so worthy of his choice as Cecilia Travers, she felt not less indignant than regretful at the overthrow of her plans.

At first, indeed, she was so provoked that she would not listen to his pleadings. She broke away from him with a rudeness she had never exhibited to any one before, refused to grant him another interview in order to rediscuss the matter, and said that so far from using her influence in favor of his romantic folly, she would remonstrate well with Lady

Chillingly and Sir Peter against yielding their assent to his "thus throwing himself away."

It was not till the third day after his arrival that, touched by the grave but haughty mournfulness of his countenance, she yielded to the arguments of Sir Peter in the course of a private conversation with that worthy baronet. Still it was reluctantly (she did not fulfil her threat of remonstrance with Lady Chillingly) that she conceded the point, that a son who, succeeding to the absolute fee simple of an estate, had volunteered the resettlement of it on terms singularly generous to both his parents, was entitled to some sacrifice of their inclinations on a question in which he deemed his happiness vitally concerned; and that he was of age to choose for himself, independently of their consent, but for a previous promise extracted from him by his father, a promise which, rigidly construed, was not extended to Lady Chillingly, but confined to Sir Peter as the head of the family and master of the household. The father's consent was already given, and, if in his reverence for both parents Kenelm could not dispense with his mother's approval, surely it was the part of a true friend to remove every scruple from his conscience, and smooth away every obstacle to a love not to be condemned because it was disinterested.

After this conversation, Lady Glenalvon sought Kenelm, found him gloomily musing on the banks of the trout-stream, took his arm, led him into the sombre glades of the fir grove, and listened patiently to all he had to say. Even then her woman's heart was not won to his reasonings, until he said pathetically, "You thanked me once for saving your son's life; you said then that you could never repay me; you can repay me tenfold. Could your son, who is now, we trust, in heaven, look down and judge between us, do you think he would approve you if you refuse?"

Then Lady Glenalvon wept and took his hand, kissed his forehead as a mother might kiss it, and said, "You triumph; I will go to Lady Chillingly at once. Marry her whom you so love, on one condition; marry her from my house."

Lady Glenalvon was not one of those women who serve a friend by halves. She knew well how to propitiate and reason down the apathetic temperament of Lady Chillingly; she did not cease till that lady herself came into Kenelm's room, and said very quietly,

"So you are going to propose to Miss Mordaunt, the Warwickshire Mordaunts I suppose. Lady Glenalvon says she is a very lovely girl, and will stay with her before the wedding. And, as the young lady is an orphan, Lady Glenalvon's uncle the Duke, who is connected with the eldest branch of the Mordaunts, will give her away. It will be a very brilliant affair. I am sure I wish you happy, it is time you should have sown your wild oats."

Two days after the consent thus formally given, Kenelm quitted Exmundham. Sir Peter would have accompanied him to pay his respects to the intended, but the agitation he had gone through brought on a sharp twinge of the gout, which consigned his feet to flannels.

After Kenelm had gone, Lady Glenalvon went into Cecilia's room. Cecilia was seated very desolately by the open window; she had detected that something of an anxious and painful nature had been weighing upon the minds of father and son, and had connected it with the letter which had so disturbed the even mind of Sir Peter; but she did not divine what the something was, and if mortified by a certain reserve, more distant than heretofore, which had characterized Kenelm's manner towards herself, the mortification was less sensibly felt than a tender sympathy for the sadness she had observed on his face, and yearned to soothe. His reserve had, however, made her own manner more reserved than of old, for which she was now rather chiding herself than reproaching him.

Lady Glenalvon put her arms round Cecilia's neck and kissed her, whispering, "That man has so disappointed me, he is so unworthy of the happiness I had once hoped for him!"

"Whom do you speak of?" murmured Cecilia, turning very pale.

"Kenelm Chillingly. It seems that he has conceived a fancy for some penniless girl whom he has met in his wanderings, has come here to get the consent of his parents to propose to her, has obtained their consent, and is gone to propose."

Cecilia remained silent for a moment with her eyes closed, then she said, "He is worthy of all happiness, and he would never make an unworthy choice. Heaven bless him—and—

and——" She would have added, "his bride," but her lips refused to utter the word bride.

"Cousin Gordon is worth ten of him," cried Lady Glenalvon, indignantly.

She had served Kenelm, but she had not forgiven him.

CHAPTER V.

Kenelm slept in London that night, and, the next day being singularly fine for an English summer, he resolved to go to Moleswich on foot. He had no need this time to encumber himself with a knapsack; he had left sufficient change of dress in his lodgings at Cromwell Lodge.

It was towards the evening when he found himself in one of the prettiest rural villages by which

> "Wanders the hoary Thames along
> His silver-winding way."

It was not in the direct road from London to Moleswich, but it was a pleasanter way for a pedestrian. And when, quitting the long street of the sultry village, he came to the shelving margin of the river, he was glad to rest awhile, enjoy the cool of the rippling waters, and listen to their placid murmurs amid the rushes in the bordering shallows. He had ample time before him. His rambles while at Cromwell Lodge had made him familiar with the district for miles round Moleswich, and he knew that a footpath through the fields at the right would lead him, in less than an hour, to the side of the tributary brook on which Cromwell Lodge was placed, opposite the wooden bridge which conducted to Grasmere and Moleswich.

To one who loves the romance of history, English history, the whole course of the Thames is full of charm. Ah! could I go back to the days in which younger generations than that of Kenelm Chillingly were unborn, when every wave of the Rhine spoke of history and romance to me, what fairies should meet on thy banks, O thou our own Father Thames! Perhaps some day a German pilgrim may repay tenfold to thee the tribute rendered by the English kinsman to the Father Rhine.

Listening to the whispers of the reeds, Kenelm Chillingly felt the haunting influence of the legendary stream. Many a poetic incident or tradition in antique chronicle, many a votive rhyme in song, dear to forefathers whose very names have become a poetry to us, thronged dimly and confusedly back to his memory, which had little cared to retain such graceful trinkets in the treasure-house of love. But everything that, from childhood upwards, connects itself with romance—revives with yet fresher bloom in the memories of him who loves.

And to this man, through the first perilous season of youth, so abnormally safe from youth's most wonted peril,—to this would-be pupil of realism, this learned adept in the schools of a Welby or a Mivers,—to this man, Love came at last as with the fatal powers of the fabled Cytherèa; and with that love all the realisms of life became ideals, all the stern lines of our common-place destinies undulating into curves of beauty, all the trite sounds of our everyday life attuned into delicacies of song. How full of sanguine yet dreamy bliss was his heart,—and seemed his future,—in the gentle breeze and the softened glow of that summer eve! He should see Lily the next morn, and his lips were now free to say all that they had as yet suppressed.

Suddenly he was roused from the half-awake, half-asleep happiness that belongs to the moments in which we transport ourselves into Elysium, by the carol of a voice more loudly joyous than that of his own heart—

> "Singing—singing,
> Lustily singing,
> Down the road, with his dogs before,
> Came the Ritter of Nierestein."

Kenelm turned his head so quickly that he frightened Max, who had for the last minute been standing behind him inquisitively with one paw raised, and sniffing, in some doubt whether he recognized an old acquaintance; but at Kenelm's quick movement the animal broke into a nervous bark, and ran back to his master.

The Minstrel, little heeding the figure reclined on the bank, would have passed on with his light tread and his cheery carol, but Kenelm rose to his feet, and holding out his hand, said, "I hope you don't share Max's alarm at meeting me again?"

"Ah, my young philosopher, is it indeed you?"

"If I am to be designated a philosopher it

is certainly not I. And, honestly speaking, I am not the same. I, who spent that pleasant day with you among the fields round Luscombe two years ago——"

"Or who advised me at Tor Hadham to string my lyre to the praise of a beefsteak. I, too, am not quite the same, I, whose dog presented you with the begging-tray."

"Yet you still go through the world singing."

"Even that vagrant singing time is pretty well over. But I disturbed you from your repose. I would rather share it; you are probably not going my way, and as I am in no hurry, I should not like to lose the opportunity chance has so happily given me of renewing acquaintance with one who has often been present to my thoughts since we last met." Thus saying, the Minstrel stretched himself at ease on the bank, and Kenelm followed his example.

There certainly was a change in the owner of the dog with the begging-tray, a change in costume, in countenance, in that indescribable self-evidence which we call "manner." The costume was not that Bohemian attire in which Kenelm had first encountered the Wandering Minstrel, nor the studied, more graceful garb, which so well became his shapely form, during his visit to Luscombe. It was now neatly simple, the cool and quiet summer dress any English gentleman might adopt in a long rural walk. And as he uncovered his head to court the cooling breeze, there was a graver dignity in the man's handsome Rubens-like face, a line of more concentrated thought in the spacious forehead, a thread or two of gray shimmering here and there through the thick auburn curls of hair and beard. And in his manner, though still very frank, there was just perceptible a sort of self-assertion, not offensive, but manly; such as does not misbecome one of maturer years, and of some established position, addressing another man much younger than himself, who in all probability has achieved no position at all beyond that which the accident of birth might assign to him.

"Yes," said the Minstrel, with a half-suppressed sigh, "the last year of my vagrant holidays has come to its close. I recollect that the first day we met by the roadside fountain, I advised you to do like me, seek amusement and adventure as a foot traveller. Now, seeing you, evidently a gentleman by education and birth, still a foot traveller, I feel as if I ought to say, 'You have had enough of such experience; vagabond life has its perils as well as charms; cease it and settle down.'"

"I think of doing so," replied Kenelm, laconically.

"In a profession?—army—law—medicine?"

"No."

"Ah, in marriage then. Right; give me your hand on that. So a petticoat indeed has at last found its charm for you in the actual world, as well as on the canvas of a picture?"

"I conclude," said Kenelm,—evading any direct notice of that playful taunt,—"I conclude from your remark that it is in marriage *you* are about to settle down."

"Ay, could I have done so before I should have been saved from many errors, and been many years nearer to the goal which dazzled my sight through the haze of my boyish dreams."

"What is that goal—the grave?"

"The grave! That which allows of no grave—Fame."

"I see—despite of what you just now said—you still mean to go through the world seeking a poet's fame."

"Alas! I resign that fancy," said the Minstrel, with another half-sigh. "It was not indeed wholly, but in great part the hope of the poet's fame that made me a truant in the way to that which destiny, and such few gifts as nature conceded to me, marked out for my proper and only goal. But what a strange, delusive Will-o'-the-Wisp the love of verse-making is! How rarely a man of good sense deceives himself as to other things for which he is fitted, in which he can succeed; but let him once drink into his being the charm of verse-making, how the glamour of the charm bewitches his understanding! how long it is before he can believe that the world will not take his word for it, when he cries out to sun, moon, and stars, 'I, too, am a poet.' And with what agonies, as if at the wrench of soul from life, he resigns himself at last to the conviction, that whether he or the world be right, it comes to the same thing. Who can plead his cause before a court that will not give him a hearing?"

It was with an emotion so passionately strong, and so intensely painful, that the owner of the dog with the begging-tray thus spoke, that Kenelm felt, through sympathy, as if he him-

self were torn asunder by the wrench of life from soul. But then, Kenelm was a mortal so eccentric, that, if a single acute suffering endured by a fellow-mortal could be brought before the evidence of his senses, I doubt whether he would not have suffered as much as that fellow-mortal. So that, though if there were a thing in the world which Kenelm Chillingly would care not to do, it was verse-making, his mind involuntarily hastened to the arguments by which he could best mitigate the pang of the verse-maker.

Quoth he—"According to my very scanty reading, you share the love of verse-making with men the most illustrious in careers which have achieved the goal of fame. It must, then, be a very noble love—Augustus, Pollio, Varius, Mæcenas—the greatest statesmen of their day; they were verse-makers. Cardinal Richelieu was a verse-maker; Walter Raleigh and Philip Sidney, Fox, Burke, Sheridan, Warren Hastings, Canning—even the grave William Pitt; all were verse-makers. Verse-making did not retard—no doubt the qualities essential to verse-making accelerated—their race to the goal of fame. What great painters have been verse-makers! Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Salvator Rosa"—and Heaven knows how many other great names Kenelm Chillingly might have proceeded to add to his list, if the Minstrel had not here interposed.

"What! all those mighty painters were verse-makers?"

"Verse-makers so good, especially Michael Angelo—the greatest painter of all—that they would have had the fame of poets, if, unfortunately for that goal of fame, their glory in the sister art of painting did not outshine it. But when you give to your gift of song the modest title of verse-making, permit me to observe that your gift is perfectly distinct from that of the verse-maker. Your gift, whatever it may be, could not exist without some sympathy with the non-verse-making human heart. No doubt, in your foot-travels, you have acquired not only observant intimacy with external nature in the shifting hues at each hour of a distant mountain, in the lengthening shadows which yon sunset casts on the waters at our feet, in the habits of the thrush dropped fearlessly close beside me, in that turf moistened by its neighborhood to those dripping rushes, all of which I could describe no less accurately than you—as a Peter Bell might describe them no less accurately than a William Wordsworth. But in such songs of yours as you have permitted me to hear, you seem to have escaped out of that elementary accidence of the poet's art, and to touch, no matter how slightly, on the only lasting interest which the universal heart of man can have in the song of the poet—viz., in the sound which the poet's individual sympathy draws forth from the latent chords in that universal heart. As for what you call 'the world,' what is it more than the fashion of the present day? How far the judgment of that is worth a poet's pain I can't pretend to say. But of one thing I am sure, that while I could as easily square the circle as compose a simple couplet addressed to the heart of a simple audience with sufficient felicity to decoy their praises into Max's begging-tray, I could spin out by the yard the sort of verse-making which characterizes the fashion of the present day."

Much flattered, and not a little amused, the Wandering Minstrel turned his bright countenance, no longer dimmed by a cloud, towards that of his lazily-reclined consoler, and answered gaily—

"You say that you could spin out by the yard verses in the fashion of the present day. I wish you would give me a specimen of your skill in that handiwork."

"Very well; on one condition, that you will repay my trouble by a specimen of your own verses, not in the fashion of the present day,—something which I can construe. I defy you to construe mine."

"Agreed."

"Well, then, let us take it for granted that this is the Augustan age of English poetry, and that the English language is dead, like the Latin. Suppose I am writing for a prize medal, in English, as I wrote at college for a prize medal, in Latin; of course, I shall be successful in proportion as I introduce the verbal elegances peculiar to our Augustan age, and also catch the prevailing poetic characteristic of that classical epoch.

"Now I think that every observant critic will admit that the striking distinctions of the poetry most in the fashion of the present day, viz., of the Augustan age, are—first, a selection of such verbal elegances as would have been most repulsive to the barbaric taste of the

preceding century; and, secondly, a very lofty disdain of all prosaic condescensions to common sense, and an elaborate cultivation of that element of the sublime which Mr. Burke defines under the head of obscurity.

"These premises conceded, I will only ask you to choose the metre. Blank verse is very much in fashion just now."

"Pooh!—blank verse indeed—I am not going so to free your experiment from the difficulties of rhyme."

"It is all one to me," said Kenelm, yawning. "Rhyme be it: heroic, or lyrical?"

"Heroics are old-fashioned; but the Chaucer couplet, as brought to perfection by our modern poets, I think the best adapted to dainty leaves and uncrackable nuts. I accept the modern Chaucerian."

"The subject?"

"Oh, never trouble yourself about that. By whatever title your Augustan verse-maker labels his poem, his genius, like Pindar's, disdains to be cramped by the subject. Listen, and don't suffer Max to howl, if he can help it. Here goes."

And in an affected, but emphatic, sing-song, Kenelm began:—

"In Attica the gentle Pythias dwelt.
Youthful he was, and passing rich: he felt
As if nor youth nor riches could suffice
For bliss. Dark-eyed Sophronia was a nice
Girl: and one summer day, when Neptune drove
His sea-car slowly, and the olive grove
That skirts Ilissus, to thy shell, Harmonia,
Rippled, he said 'I love thee' to Sophronia.
Crocus and Iris, when they heard him, wagg'd
Their pretty heads in glee: the honey-bagg'd
Bees became altars; and the forest dove
Her plumage smooth'd. Such is the charm of love.
Of this sweet story do ye long for more?
Wait till I publish it in volumes four;
Which certain critics, my good friends, will cry
Up beyond Chaucer. Take their word for't. I
Say 'Trust them: but not read,—or you'll not buy.'"

"You have certainly kept your word," said the Minstrel, laughing. "And if this be the Augustan age, and the English were a dead language, you deserve to win the prize medal."

"You flatter me," said Kenelm, modestly. "But if I, who never before strung two ryhmes together, can improvise so readily in the style of the present day, why should not a practical rhymster like yourself dash off at a sitting a volume or some in the same style; disguising completely the verbal elegances borrowed, adding to the delicacies of the rhyme by the frequent introduction of a line that will not scan, and towering yet more into the sublime by becoming yet more unintelligible. Do that, and I promise you the most glowing panegyric in 'The Londoner,' for I will write it myself."

"'The Londoner!'" exclaimed the Minstrel, with an angry flush on his cheek and brow. "My bitter, relentless enemy."

"I fear, then, you have as little studied the critical press of the Augustan age as you have imbued your Muse with the classical spirit of its verse. For the art of writing a man must cultivate himself. The art of being reviewed consists in cultivating the acquaintance of reviewers. In the Augustan age criticism is cliquism. Belong to a clique, and you are Horace or Tibullus. Belong to no clique, and, of course, you are Bavius or Mævius. 'The Londoner' is the enemy of no man—it holds all men in equal contempt. But as, in order to amuse, it must abuse, it compensates the praise it is compelled to bestow upon the members of its clique by heaping additional scorn upon all who are cliqueless. Hit him hard, he has no friends."

"Ah," said the Minstrel, "I believe that there is much truth in what you say. I never had a friend among the cliques. And Heaven knows with what pertinacity those from whom I, in utter ignorance of the rules which govern the so-called organs of opinion, had hoped, in my time of struggle, for a little sympathy,—a kindly encouragement,—have combined to crush me down. They succeeded long. But at last I venture to hope that I am beating them. Happily, Nature endowed me with a sanguine, joyous, elastic temperament. He who never despairs seldom completely fails."

This speech rather perplexed Kenelm, for had not the Minstrel declared that his singing days were over, that he had decided on the renunciation of verse-making? What other path to fame, from which the critics had not been able to exclude his steps, was he, then, now pursuing? he whom Kenelm had assumed to belong to some commercial money-making firm. No doubt some less difficult prose-track—probably a novel. Everybody writes novels nowadays, and as the public will read novels without being told to do so, and will not read poetry unless they are told that they ought, possibly novels are not quite so much at the

mercy of cliques, as are the poems of our Augustan age.

However, Kenelm did not think of seeking for further confidence on that score. His mind at that moment, not unnaturally, wandered from books and critics to love and wedlock.

"Our talk," said he, "has digressed into fretful courses—permit me to return to the starting-point. You are going to settle down into the peace of home. A peaceful home is like a good conscience. The rains without do not pierce its roof, the winds without do not shake its walls. If not an impertinent question, is it long since you have known your intended bride?"

"Yes, very long."

"And always loved her?"

"Always, from her infancy. Out of all womankind, she was designed to be my life's playmate, and my soul's purifier. I know not what might have become of me, if the thought of her had not walked beside me as my guardian angel. For, like many vagrants from the beaten high-roads of the world, there is in my nature something of that lawlessness which belongs to high animal spirits, to the zest of adventure, and the warm blood which runs into song, chiefly because song is the voice of a joy. And, no doubt, when I look back on the past years I must own that I have too often been led astray from the objects set before my reason, and cherished at my heart, by erring impulse or wanton fancy."

"Petticoat interest, I presume," interposed Kenelm drily.

"I wish I could honestly answer 'No,'" said the Minstrel, coloring high. "But from the worst, from all that would have permanently blasted the career to which I entrust my fortunes, all that would have rendered me unworthy of the pure love that now, I trust, awaits and crowns my dreams of happiness, I have been saved by the haunting smile in a sinless infantine face. Only once was I in great peril—that hour of peril I recall with a shudder. It was at Luscombe."

"At Luscombe!"

"In the temptation of a terrible crime I thought I heard a voice say—'Mischief! Remember the little child.' In that supervention which is so readily accepted as a divine warning, when the imagination is morbidly excited, and when the conscience, though lulled asleep for a moment, is still asleep so lightly that the sigh of a breeze, the fall of a leaf, can awake it with a start of terror, I took the voice for that of my guardian angel. Thinking over it later, and coupling the voice with the moral of those weird lines you repeated to me so appositely the next day, I conclude that I am not mistaken when I say it was from your lips that the voice which preserved me came."

"I confess the impertinence—you pardon it!"

The Minstrel seized Kenelm's hand and pressed it earnestly.

"Pardon it! Oh, could you but guess what cause I have to be grateful, everlastingly grateful! That sudden cry, the remorse and horror of my own self that it struck into me—deepened by those rugged lines which the next day made me shrink in dismay from 'the face of my darling sin!' Then came the turning-point of my life. From that day, the lawless vagabond within me was killed. I mean not, indeed, the love of nature and of song which had first allured the vagabond, but the hatred of steadfast habits and of serious work—*that* was killed. I no longer trifled with my calling, I took to it as a serious duty. And when I saw her, whom fate has reserved and reared for my bride, her face was no longer in my eyes that of the playful child; the soul of the woman was dawning into it. It is but two years since that day, to me so eventful. Yet my fortunes are now secured. And if fame be not established, I am at last in a position which warrants my saying to her I love, 'The time has come when, without fear for thy future, I can ask thee to be mine.'"

The man spoke with so fervent a passion that Kenelm silently left him to recover his wonted self-possession,—not unwilling to be silent—not unwilling, in the softness of the hour, passing from roseate sunset into starry twilight, to murmur to himself, "And the time, too, has come for me!"

After a few moments the Minstrel resumed lightly and cheerily—

"Sir, your turn—pray have you long known—judging by our former conversation you cannot have long loved—the lady whom you have wooed and won?"

As Kenelm had neither as yet wooed nor won the lady in question, and did not deem it necessary to enter into any details on the sub-

ject of love particular to himself, he replied by a general observation—

"It seems to me that the coming of love is like the coming of spring—the date is not to be reckoned by the calendar. It may be slow and gradual; it may be quick and sudden. But in the morning, when we wake and recognize a change in the world without, verdure on the trees, blossoms on the sward, warmth in the sunshine, music in the air, then we say Spring has come!"

"I like your illustration. And if it be an idle question to ask a lover how long he has known the beloved one, so it is almost as idle to ask if she be not beautiful. He cannot but see in her face the beauty she has given to the world without."

"True; and that thought is poetic enough to make me remind you that I favored you with the maiden specimen of my verse-making on condition that you repaid me by a specimen of your own practical skill in the art. And I claim the right to suggest the theme. Let it be——"

"Of a beef-steak?"

"Tush, you have worn out that tasteless joke at my expense. The theme must be of love, and if you could improvise a stanza or two expressive of the idea you just uttered I shall listen with yet more pleased attention."

"Alas! I am no improvisatore. Yet I will avenge myself on your former neglect of my craft by chanting to you a trifle somewhat in unison with the thought you ask me to versify, but which you would not stay to hear at Tor Hadham (though you did drop a shilling into Max's tray)—it was one of the songs I sang that evening, and it was not ill-received by my humble audience.

THE BEAUTY OF THE MISTRESS IS IN THE LOVER'S EYE.

"Is she not pretty, my Mabel May?
Nobody ever yet called her so.
Are not her lineaments faultless, say?
If I must answer you plainly—No.

"Joy to believe that the maid I love
None but myself as she is can see;
Joy that she steals from her Heaven above,
And is only revealed on this earth to me!"

As soon as he had finished this very artless ditty, the Minstrel rose and said—

"Now I must bid you good-bye. My way lies through those meadows, and yours, no doubt, along the highroad."

"Not so. Permit me to accompany you. I have a lodging not far from hence, to which the path through the fields is the shortest way."

The Minstrel turned a somewhat surprised and somewhat inquisitive look towards Kenelm. But feeling, perhaps, that having withheld from his fellow-traveller all confidence as to his own name and attributes, he had no right to ask any confidence from that gentleman not voluntarily made to him, he courteously said, "that he wished the way were longer, since it would be so pleasantly halved," and strode forth at a brisk pace.

The twilight was now closing into the brightness of a starry summer-night, and the solitude of the fields was unbroken. Both these men, walking side by side, felt supremely happy. But happiness is like wine; its effect differing with the differing temperaments on which it acts. It this case garrulous and somewhat vaunting with the one man, warm-colored, sensuous, impressionable to the influences of external nature, as an Æolian harp to the rise or fall of a passing wind; and, with the other man, taciturn and somewhat modestly expressed, saturnine, meditative, not indeed dull to the influences of external nature, but deeming them of no value, save where they passed out of the domain of the sensuous into that of the intellectual, and the soul of man dictated to the soulless nature its own questions and its own replies.

The Minstrel took the talk on himself, and the talk charmed his listener. It became so really eloquent in the tones of its utterance, in the frank play of its delivery, that I could no more adequately describe it than a reporter, however faithful to every word a true orator may say, can describe that which, apart from all words, belong to the presence of the orator himself.

Not, then, venturing to report the language of this singular itinerant, I content myself with saying that the substance of it was of the nature on which it is said most men can be eloquent: it was personal to himself. He spoke of aspirations towards the achievement of a name, dating back to the dawn of memory; of early obstacles in lowly birth, stinted fortunes; of a sudden opening to his ambition while yet in boyhood, through the generous favor of a rich man, who said, "The child has genius, I will give it the discipline of culture, one day it

shall repay to the world what it owes to me;" of studies passionately begun, earnestly pursued, and mournfully suspended in early youth. He did not say how or wherefore: he rushed on to dwell upon the struggles for a livelihood for himself and those dependent on him; how in such struggles he was compelled to divert toil and energy from the systematic pursuit of the object he had once set before him; the necessities for money were too urgent to be postponed to the visions of fame. "But even," he exclaimed passionately, "even in such hasty and crude manifestations of what is within me, as circumstances limited my powers, I know that I ought to have found from those who profess to be authoritative judges the encouragement of praise. How much better, then, I should have done if I had found it! How a little praise warms out of a man the good that is in him, and the sneer of a contempt which he feels to be unjust chills the ardor to excel! However, I forced my way, so far as was then most essential to me, the sufficing bread-maker for those I loved; and in my holidays of song and ramble I found a delight that atoned for all the rest. But still the desire of fame, once conceived in childhood, once nourished through youth, never dies but in our grave. Foot and hoof may tread it down, bud, leaf, stalk; its root is too deep below the surface for them to reach, and year after year stalk and leaf and bud re-emerge. Love may depart from our mortal life; we console ourselves—the beloved will be re-united to us in the life to come. But if he who sets his heart on fame loses it in this life, what can console him?"

"Did you not say a little while ago that fame allowed of no grave?"

"True; but if we do not achieve it before we ourselves are in the grave, what comfort can it give to us? Love ascends to heaven, to which we hope ourselves to ascend; but fame remains on the earth, which we shall never again revisit. And it is because fame is earth-born that the desire for it is the most lasting, the regret for the want of it the most bitter, to the child of earth. But I shall achieve it now; it is already in my grasp."

By this time the travellers had arrived at the brook, facing the wooden bridge beside Cromwell Lodge.

Here the Minstrel halted; and Kenelm, with a certain tremble in his voice, said, "Is it not time that we should make ourselves known to each other by name? I have no longer any cause to conceal mine, indeed I never had any cause stronger than whim—Kenelm Chillingly, the only son of Sir Peter, of Exmundham, ——shire."

"I wish your father joy of so clever a son," said the Minstrel with his wonted urbanity. "You already know enough of me to be aware that I am of much humbler birth and station than you; but if you chance to have visited the exhibition of the Royal Academy this year—ah! I understand that start—you might have recognized a picture of which you have seen the rudimentary sketch, 'The girl with the flower-ball,' one of three pictures very severely handled by 'The Londoner,' but, in spite of that potent enemy, ensuring fortune and promising fame to the Wandering Minstrel, whose name, if the sight of the pictures had induced you to inquire into that, you would have found to be Walter Melville. Next January I hope, thanks to that picture, to add, 'Associate of the Royal Academy.' The public will not let them keep me out of it, in spite of 'The Londoner.' You are probably an expected guest at one of the more imposing villas from which we see the distant lights. I am going to a very humble cottage, in which henceforth I hope to find my established home. I am there now only for a few days, but pray let me welcome you there before I leave. The cottage is called Grasmere."

CHAPTER VI.

THE Minstrel gave a cordial parting shake of the hand to the fellow-traveller whom he had advised to settle down, not noticing how very cold had become the hand in his own genial grasp. Lightly he passed over the wooden bridge, preceded by Max, and merrily, when he had gained the other side of the bridge, came upon Kenelm's ear, through the hush of the luminous night, the verse of the uncompleted love song—

> "Singing—singing,
> Lustily singing,
> Down the road with his dogs before,
> Came the Ritter of Nierestein."

Love song, uncompleted—why uncompleted? It was not given to Kenelm to divine the why. It was a love song versifying one of the prettiest fairy tales in the world, which was a great favorite with Lily, and which Lion had promised Lily to versify, but only to complete it in her presence, and to her perfect satisfaction.

CHAPTER VII.

If I could not venture to place upon paper the exact words of an eloquent coveter of fame, the earth-born, still less can I dare to place upon paper all that passed through the voiceless heart of a coveter of love, the heaven-born.

From the hour in which Kenelm Chillingly had parted from Walter Melville until somewhere between sunrise and noon the next day, the summer joyousness of that external nature which does now and then, though, for the most part, deceitfully, address to the soul of man questions and answers all her soulless own, laughed away the gloom of his misgivings.

No doubt this Walter Melville was the beloved guardian of Lily; no doubt it was Lily whom he designated as reserved and reared to become his bride. But on that question Lily herself had the sovereign voice. It remained yet to be seen whether Kenelm had deceived himself in the belief that had made the world so beautiful to him since the hour of their last parting. At all events it was due to her, due even to his rival, to assert his own claim to her choice. And the more he recalled all that Lily had ever said to him of her guardian, so openly, so frankly, proclaiming affection, admiration, gratitude, the more convincingly his reasonings allayed his fears, whispering "So might a child speak of a parent: not so does the maiden speak of the man she loves; she can scarcely trust herself to praise."

In fine, it was not in despondent mood, nor with dejected looks, that, a little before noon, Kenelm crossed the bridge and re-entered the enchanted land of Grasmere. In answer to his inquiries, the servant who opened the door said that neither Mr. Melville nor Miss Mordaunt were at home; they had just gone out together for a walk. He was about to turn back, when Mrs. Cameron came into the hall, and, rather by gesture than words, invited him to enter. Kenelm followed her into the drawing-room, taking his seat beside her. He was about to speak, when she interrupted him in a tone of voice so unlike its usual languor, so keen, so sharp, that it sounded like a cry of distress.

"I was just about to come to you. Happily, however, you find me alone, and what may pass between us will be soon over. But first tell me—you have seen your parents; you have asked their consent to wed a girl such as I described; tell me, oh tell me that that consent is refused!"

"On the contrary, I am here with their full permission to ask the hand of your niece."

Mrs. Cameron sank back in her chair, rocking herself to and fro in the posture of a person in great pain.

"I feared that. Walter said he had met you last evening; that you, like himself, entertained the thought of marriage. You, of course, when you learnt his name, must have known with whom his thought was connected. Happily, he could not divine what was the choice to which your youthful fancy had been so blindly led."

"My dear Mrs. Cameron," said Kenelm, very mildly, but very firmly, "you were aware of the purpose for which I left Moleswich a few days ago, and it seems to me that you might have forestalled my intention, the intention which brings me thus early to your house. I come to say to Miss Mordaunt's guardian, 'I ask the hand of your ward. If you also woo her, I have a very noble rival. With both of us no consideration for our own happiness can be comparable to the duty of consulting hers. Let her choose between the two.'"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Mrs. Cameron; "impossible! You know not what you say; know not, guess not, how sacred are the claims of Walter Melville to all that the orphan whom he has protected from her very birth can give him in return. She has no right to a preference for another; her heart is too grateful to admit of one. If the choice were given to her between him and you, it is he whom she would choose. Solemnly I assure you of this. Do not, then, subject her to the pain of such a choice. Suppose, if you will, that you had attracted her fancy, and that now you proclaimed your love and urged your suit, she would not,

must not, the less reject your hand, but you might cloud her happiness in accepting Melville's. Be generous. Conquer your own fancy; it can be but a passing one. Speak not to her, nor to Mr. Melville, of a wish which can never be realized. Go hence, silently, and at once."

The words and the manner of the pale imploring woman struck a vague awe into the heart of her listener. But he did not the less resolutely answer, "I cannot obey you. It seems to me that my honor commands me to prove to your niece that, if I mistook the nature of her feelings towards me, I did not, by word or look, lead her to believe mine towards herself were less in earnest than they are; and it seems scarcely less honorable towards my worthy rival to endanger his own future happiness, should he discover later that his bride would have been happier with another. Why be so mysteriously apprehensive? If, as you say, with such apparent conviction, there is no doubt of your niece's preference for another, at a word from her own lips I depart, and you will see me no more. But that word must be said by her; and if you will not permit me to ask for it in your own house, I will take my chance of finding her now, on her walk with Mr. Melville; and, could he deny me the right to speak to her alone, that which I would say can be said in his presence. Ah! madam, have you no mercy for the heart that you so needlessly torture? If I must hear the worst, let me learn it, and at once."

"Learn it, then, from my lips," said Mrs. Cameron, speaking with voice unnaturally calm, and features rigidly set into stern composure. "And I place the secret you wring from me under the seal of that honor, which you so vauntingly make your excuse for imperilling the peace of the home I ought never to have suffered you to enter. An honest couple, of humble station and narrow means, had an only son, who evinced in early childhood talents so remarkable that they attracted the notice of the father's employer, a rich man of very benevolent heart and very cultivated taste. He sent the child, at his expense, to a first-rate commercial school, meaning to provide for him later in his own firm. The rich man was the head partner of an eminent bank; but very infirm health, and tastes much estranged from business, had induced him to retire from all active share in the firm, the management of which was confined to a son whom he idolized. But the talents of the *protégé* he had sent to school, there took so passionate a direction towards art, and estranged from trade; and his designs in drawing, when shown to connoisseurs, were deemed so promising of future excellence; that the patron changed his original intention, entered him as a pupil in the studio of a distinguished French painter, and afterwards bade him perfect his taste by the study of Italian and Flemish masterpieces.

"He was still abroad, when—" here Mrs. Cameron stopped, with visible effort, suppressed a sob, and went on, whisperingly, through teeth clenched together—"when a thunderbolt fell on the house of the patron, shattering his fortunes, blasting his name. The son, unknown to the father, had been decoyed into speculations, which proved unfortunate; the loss might have been easily retrieved in the first instance, unhappily he took the wrong course to retrieve it, and launched into new hazards. I must be brief. One day the world was startled by the news that a firm, famed for its supposed wealth and solidity, was bankrupt. Dishonesty was alleged, was proved, not against the father,—he went forth from the trial, censured indeed for neglect, not condemned for fraud, but a penniless pauper. The—son—the son—the idolized son—was removed from the prisoner's dock, a convicted felon, sentenced to penal servitude. Escaped that sentence by—by—you guess—you guess. How could he escape except through death? —death by his own guilty deed."

Almost as much overpowered by emotion as Mrs. Cameron herself, Kenelm covered his bended face with one hand, stretching out the other blindly to clasp her own, but she would not take it.

A dreary foreboding. Again before his eyes rose the old gray tower—again in his ears thrilled the tragic tale of the Fletwodes. What was yet left untold held the young man in spell-bound silence. Mrs. Cameron resumed—

"I said the father was a penniless pauper; he died lingeringly bed-ridden. But one faithful friend did not desert that bed; the youth to whose genius his wealth had ministered. He had come from abroad with some modest savings from the sale of copies or sketches made in Florence. These savings kept a roof

over the heads of the old man and the two helpless broken-hearted women—paupers like himself,—his own daughter and his son's widow. When the savings were gone, the young man stooped from his destined calling, found employment somehow, no matter how alien to his tastes, and these three whom his toil supported never wanted a home or food. Well, a few weeks after her husband's terrible death, his young widow (they had not been a year married) gave birth to a child—a girl. She did not survive the exhaustion of her confinement many days. The shock of her death snapped the feeble thread of the poor father's life. Both were borne to the grave on the same day. Before they died, both made the same prayer to their sole two mourners, the felon's sister, the old man's young benefactor. The prayer was this, that the new-born infant should be reared, however humbly, in ignorance of her birth, of a father's guilt and shame. She was not to pass a suppliant for charity to rich and high-born kinsfolk, who had vouchsafed no word even of pity to the felon's guiltless father and as guiltless wife. That promise has been kept till now. I am that daughter. The name I bear, and the name which I gave to my niece, are not ours, save as we may indirectly claim them through alliances centuries ago. I have never married. I was to have been a bride, bringing to the representative of no ignoble house what was to have been a princely dower; the wedding day was fixed, when the bolt fell. I have never again seen my betrothed. He went abroad and died there. I think he loved me, he knew I loved him. Who can blame him for deserting me? Who could marry the felon's sister? Who would marry the felon's child? Who, but one? The man who knows her secret, and will guard it; the man who, caring little for other education, has helped to instil into her spotless childhood so steadfast a love of truth, so exquisite a pride of honor, that did she know such ignominy rested on her birth, she would pine herself away."

"Is there only one man on earth," cried Kenelm, suddenly, rearing his face—till then concealed and downcast—and with a loftiness of pride on its aspect, new to its wonted mildness, —"is there only one man who would deem the virgin, at whose feet he desires to kneel and say, 'Deign to be the queen of my life,' not far too noble in herself to be debased by the sins of others before she was even born; is there only one man who does not think that the love of truth and the pride of honor are most royal attributes of woman or of man, no matter whether the fathers of the woman or the man were pirates as lawless as the fathers of Norman kings, or liars as unscrupulous, where their own interests were concerned, as have been the crowned representatives of lines as deservedly famous as Cæsars and Bourbons, Tudors and Stuarts? Nobility, like genius is inborn. One man alone guard *her* secret!—guard a secret that if made known could trouble a heart that recoils from shame! Ah, madam, we Chillinglys are a very obscure undistinguished race, but for more than a thousand years we have been English gentlemen. Guard her secret rather than risk the chance of discovery that could give her a pang? I would pass my whole life by her side in Kamtchatka, and even there I would not snatch a glimpse of the secret itself with mine own eyes, it should be so closely muffled and wrapped round by the folds of reverence and worship."

This burst of passion seemed to Mrs. Cameron the senseless declamation of an inexperienced, hot-headed young man, and putting it aside, much as a great lawyer dismisses as balderdash the florid rhetoric of some junior counsel, rhetoric in which the great lawyer had once indulged, or as a woman for whom romance is over dismisses as idle verbiage some romantic sentiment that befools her young daughter, Mrs. Cameron simply replied. "All this is hollow talk, Mr. Chillingly; let us come to the point. After all I have said, do you mean to persist in your suit to my niece?"

"I persist."

"What!" she cried, this time indignantly, and with generous indignation; "what, even were it possible that you could win your parents' consent to marry the child of a man condemned to penal servitude, or, consistently with the duties a son owes to parents, conceal that fact from them, could you, born to a station on which every gossip will ask, 'Who and what is the name of the future Lady Chillingly?' believe that the who and the what will never be discovered! Have you, a mere stranger, unknown to us a few weeks ago, a right to say to Walter Melville, 'Resign to me that which is your sole reward for the sublime

sacrifices, for the loyal devotion, for the watchful tenderness of patient years!'"

"Surely, madam," cried Kenelm, more startled, more shaken in soul by this appeal, than by the previous revelations—"surely, when we last parted, when I confided to you my love for your niece, when you consented to my proposal to return home, and obtain my father's approval of my suit, —surely then was the time to say, 'No; a suitor with claims paramount and irresistible has come before you.'"

"I did not then know, Heaven is my witness, I did not then even suspect, that Walter Melville ever dreamed of seeking a wife in the child who had grown up under his eyes. You must own, indeed, how much I discouraged your suit; I could not discourage it more without revealing the secret of her birth, only to be revealed as an extreme necessity. But my persuasion was, that your father would not consent to your alliance with one so far beneath the expectations he was entitled to form, and the refusal of that consent would terminate all further acquaintance between you and Lily, leaving her secret undisclosed. It was not till you had left, only indeed two days ago, that I received from Walter Melville a letter, which told me what I had never before conjectured. Here is the letter, read it, and then say if you have the heart to force yourself into rivalry, with—with——" She broke off, choked by her exertion, thrust the letter into his hands, and with keen, eager, hungry stare watched his countenance while he read.

"—— Street, Bloomsbury.

"My dear Friend,—Joy and triumph! My picture is completed; the picture on which, for so many months, I have worked night and day in this den of a studio, without a glimpse of the green fields, concealing my address from every one, even from you, lest I might be tempted to suspend my labors. The picture is completed—it is sold; guess the price? Fifteen hundred guineas, and to a dealer—a dealer! Think of that! It is to be carried about the country, exhibited by itself. You remember those three little landscapes of mine which two years ago I would gladly have sold for ten pounds, only neither Lily nor you would let me. My good friend and earliest patron, the German merchant at Luscombe, who called on me yesterday, offered to cover them with guineas thrice piled over the canvas. Imagine how happy I felt when I forced him to accept them as a present. What a leap in a man's life it is when he can afford to say, 'I give!' Now then, at last, at last I am in a position which justifies the utterance of the hope which has for eighteen years been my solace, my support; been the sunbeam that ever shone through the gloom, when my fate was at the darkest; been the melody that buoyed me aloft as in the song of the skylark, when in the voices of men I heard but the laugh of scorn. Do you remember the night on which Lily's mother besought us to bring up her child in ignorance of her parentage, not even communicate to unkind and disdainful relatives that such a child was born? do you remember how plaintively, and yet how proudly, she so nobly born, so luxuriously nurtured, clasping my hand when I ventured to remonstrate, and say that her own family could not condemn her child because of the father's guilt,—she, the proudest woman I ever knew, she whose smile I can at rare moments detect in Lily, raised her head from her pillow, and gasped forth—

"'I am dying—the last words of the dying are commands. I command you to see that my child's lot is not that of a felon's daughter transported to the hearth of nobles. To be happy, her lot must be humble—no roof too humble to shelter, no husband too humble to wed, the felon's daughter.'

"From that hour I formed the resolve that I would keep hand and heart free, that when the grandchild of my princely benefactor grew up into womanhood I might say to her, 'I am humbly born, but thy mother would have given thee to me.' The new-born, consigned to our charge, has now ripened into woman, and I have now so assured my fortune that it is no longer poverty and struggle that I should ask her to share. I am conscious that, were her fate not so exceptional, this hope of mine would be a vain presumption—conscious that I am but the creature of her grandsire's bounty, and that from it spring all I ever can be—conscious of the disparity in years—conscious of many a past error and present fault. But, as fate so ordains, such considerations are trivial; I am her rightful choice. What other choice, compatible with these necessities which weigh, dear and honored friend, immeasurably more on your sense of honor than they do upon mine, and yet mine is not dull? Granting, then, that you, her nearest and most responsible relative, do not contemn me for presumption, all else seems to me clear. Lily's child-like affection for me is too deep and too fond not to warm into a wife's love. Happily, too, she has not been reared in the stereotyped boarding-school shallownesses of knowledge and vulgarities of gentility; but educated, like myself, by the free influences of nature, longing for no halls and palaces save those that we build as we list, in fairyland; educated to comprehend and to share the fancies, which are more than book-lore to the worshipper of art and song. In a day or two, perhaps the day after you receive this, I shall be able to escape from London, and most likely shall come on foot as usual. How I long to see once more the woodbine on the hedgerows, the green blades of the corn-fields, the sunny lapse of the river, and dearer still the tiny falls of our own little noisy rill! Meanwhile, I entreat you, dearest, gentlest, most honored of such few friends as my life has hitherto won to itself, to consider well the direct purport of this letter. If you, born in a grade so much higher than mine, feel that it is unwarrantable insolence in me to aspire to the hand of my patron's grandchild, say so plainly; and I remain not less grateful for your friendship than I was to your goodness when dining for the first time at your father's palace. Shy and sensitive and young, I felt that his grand guests wondered why I was invited to the same board as themselves. You, then courted, admired, you had sympathetic compassion on the raw, sullen boy; left those, who then seemed to me like the gods and goddesses of a heathen Pantheon, to come

and sit beside your father's *protege*, and cheeringly whisper to him such words as make a low-born ambitious lad go home light-hearted, saying to himself, 'Some day or other.' And what it is to an ambitious lad, fancying himself lifted by the gods and goddesses of a Pantheon, to go home light-hearted muttering to himself 'Some day or other,' I doubt if even you can divine.

"But should you be as kind to the presumptuous man as you were to the bashful boy, and say, 'Realized be the dream, fulfilled be the object of your life! take from me, as her next of kin, the last descendant of your benefactor,' then I venture to address to you this request. You are in the place of mother to your sister's child, act for her as a keeper now, to prepare her mind and heart for the coming change in the relations between her and me. When I last saw her, six months ago, she was still so playfully infantine that it half seems to me I should be sinning against the reverence due to a child, if I said too abruptly, 'You are woman, and I love you not as child but as woman.' And yet, time is not allowed to me for long, cautious, and gradual slide from the relationship of friend into that of lover. I now understand what the great master of my art once said to me, 'A career is a destiny.' By one of those merchant princes who now at Manchester, as they did once at Genoa or Venice, reign alike over those two civilizers of the world which to dull eyes seem antagonistic, Art and Commerce, an offer is made to me for a picture on a subject which strikes his fancy; an offer so magnificently liberal that his commerce must command my art; and the nature of the subject compels me to seek the banks of the Rhine as soon as may be. I must have all the hues of the foliage in the meridian glories of summer. I can but stay at Grasmere a very few days; but before I leave I must know this, am I going to work for Lily or am I not? On the answer to that question depends all. If not to work for her, there would be no glory in the summer, no triumph in art to me: I refuse the offer. If she says, 'Yes; it is for me you work,' then she becomes my destiny. She assures my career. Here I speak as an artist: nobody who is not an artist can guess how sovereign over even his moral being, at a certain critical epoch in his career of artist or his life of man, is the success or the failure of a single work. But I go on to speak as man. My love for Lily is such for the last six months, that though if she rejected me I should still serve art, still yearn for fame, it would be as an old man might do either. The youth of my life would be gone.

"As man I say, all my thoughts, all my dreams of happiness, distinct from Art and fame, are summed up in the one question—'Is Lily to be my wife or not?'

"Yours affectionately,

"W. M."

Kenelm returned the letter without a word.

Enraged by his silence, Mrs. Camerom exclaimed, "Now, sir, what say you? You have scarcely known Lily five weeks. What is the feverish fancy of five weeks' growth to the lifelong devotion of a man like this! Do you now dare to say, 'I persist'?"

Kenelm waved his hand very quietly, as if to dismiss all conception of taunt and insult, and said with his soft melancholy eyes fixed upon the working features of Lily's aunt, "This man is more worthy of her than I. He prays you, in his letter, to prepare your niece for that change of relationship which he dreads too abruptly to break to her himself. Have you done so?"

"I have; the night I got the letter."

"And—you hesitate; speak truthfully, I implore. And—she——"

"She," answered Mrs. Cameron, feeling herself involuntarily compelled to obey the voice of that prayer—"she seemed stunned at first, muttering, 'This is a dream—it cannot be true—cannot! I Lion's wife—I—I! I, his destiny! In me his happiness!' And then she laughed her pretty child's laugh, and put her arms round my neck, and said, 'You are jesting, aunty. He could not write thus!' So I put that part of his letter under her eyes; and when she had convinced herself, her face became very grave, more like a woman's face than I ever saw it; and after a pause she cried out, passionately, 'Can you think me—can I think myself—so bad, so ungrateful, as to doubt what I should answer, if Lion asked me whether I would willingly say or do anything that made him unhappy? If there be such a doubt in my heart, I would tear it out by the roots, heart and all!' Oh! Mr. Chillingly. There would be no happiness for her with another, knowing that she had blighted the life of him to whom she owes so much, though she never will learn how much more she owes." Kenelm not replying to this remark, Mrs. Cameron resumed—"I will be perfectly frank with you, Mr. Chillingly. I was not quite satisfied with Lily's manner and looks the next morning, that is, yesterday. I did fear there might be some struggle in her mind in which there entered a thought of yourself. And when Walter, on his arrival here in the evening, spoke of you as one he had met before in his rural excursions, but whose name he only learned on parting at the bridge by Cromwell Lodge, I saw that Lily turned pale, and shortly afterwards went to her own room for the night. Fearing that any interview with you, though it would not alter her resolve, might lessen her happiness on the only choice she can and ought to adopt, I resolved to visit you this morning, and make that appeal to your reason and your heart which I have

done now—not, I am sure, in vain. Hush! I hear his voice!"

Melville entered the room, Lily leaning on his arm. The artist's comely face was radiant with an ineffable joyousness. Leaving Lily, he reached Kenelm's side as with a single bound, shook him heartily by the hand, and said—"I find that you have already been a welcomed visitor in this house. Long may you be so, so say I, so (I answer for her) says my fair betrothed, to whom I need not present you."

Lily advanced, and held out her hand very timidly. Kenelm touched rathed than clasped it. His own strong hand trembled like a leaf. He ventured but one glance at her face. All the bloom had died out of it, but the expression seemed to him wondrously, cruelly tranquil.

"Your betrothed—your future bride!" he said to the artist, with a mastery over his emotion rendered less difficult by the single glance at that tranquil face. "I wish you joy. All happiness to you, Miss Mordaunt. You have made a noble choice."

He looked round for his hat; it lay at his feet, but he did not see it; his eyes wandering away with uncertain vision, like those of a sleep-walker.

Mrs. Cameron picked up the hat and gave it to him.

"Thank you," he said meekly; then with a smile half sweet, half bitter, "I have so much to thank you for, Mrs. Cameron."

"But you are not going already—just as I enter too. Hold! Mrs. Cameron tells me you are lodging with my old friend Jones. Come and stop a couple of days with us, we can find you a room; the room over your butterfly cage, eh, Fairy?"

"Thank you, too. Thank you all. No; I must be in London by the first train."

Speaking thus, he had found his way to the door, bowed with the quiet grace that characterized all his movements, and was gone.

"Pardon his abruptness, Lily; he too loves; he too is impatient to find a betrothed," said the artist gaily: "but now he knows my dearest secret, I think I have a right to know his; and I will try."

He had scarcely uttered the words before he too had quitted the room and overtaken Kenelm just at the threshold.

"If you are going back to Cromwell Lodge—to pack up, I suppose—let me walk with you as far as the bridge."

Kenelm inclined his head assentingly and tacitly as they passed through the garden-gate, winding backward through the lane which skirted the garden-pales; when, at the very spot in which the day after their first and only quarrel Lily's face had been seen brightening through the evergreen, that day on which the old woman, quitting her, said, "God bless you!" and on which the vicar, walking with Kenelm, spoke of her fairy charms; well, just in that spot Lily's face appeared again, not this time *brightening* through the evergreens, unless the palest gleam of the palest moon can be said to brighten. Kenelm saw, started, halted. His companion, then in the rush of a gladsome talk, of which Kenelm had not heard a word, neither saw nor halted; he walked on mechanically, gladsome, and talking.

Lily stretched forth her hand through the evergreens. Kenelm took it reverentially. This time it was not his hand that trembled.

"Good-bye," she said in a whisper, "good-bye for ever in this world. You understand—you do understand me. Say that you do."

"I understand. Noble child—noble choice. God bless you. God comfort me!" murmured Kenelm. Their eyes met. Oh, the sadness; and, alas! oh the love in the eyes of both.

Kenelm passed on.

All said in a instant. How many Alls are said in an instant! Melville was in the midst of some glowing sentence, begun when Kenelm dropped from his side, and the end of the sentence was this:

"Words cannot say how fair seems life; how easy seems conquest of fame, dating from this day—this day"—and in his turn he halted, looked round on the sunlit landscape, and breathed deep, as if to drink into his soul all of the earth's joy and beauty which his gaze could compass, and the arch of the horizon bound.

"They who knew her even the best," resumed the artist, striding on, "even her aunt, never could guess how serious and earnest, under all her infantine prettiness of fancy, is that girl's real nature. We were walking along the brookside, when I began to tell how solitary the world would be to me if I could not win her to my side; while I spoke she had turned

aside from the path we had taken, and it was not till we were under the shadow of the church in which we shall be married that she uttered the word that gives to every cloud in my fate the silver lining; implying thus how solemnly connected in her mind was the thought of love with the sanctity of religion."

Kenelm shuddered—the church—the burial-ground—the old Gothic tomb—the flowers round the infant's grave!

"But I am talking a great deal too much about myself," resumed the artist. "Lovers are the most consummate of all egotists, and the most garrulous of all gossips. You have wished me joy on my destined nuptials, when shall I wish you joy on yours? Since we have begun to confide in each other, you are in my debt as to a confidence."

They had now gained the bridge. Kenelm turned round abruptly, "Good day; let us part here. I have nothing to confide to you that might not seem to your ears a mockery when I wish you joy." So saying, so obeying in spite of himself the anguish of his heart, Kenelm wrung his companion's hand with the force of an uncontrollable agony, and speeded over the bridge before Melville recovered his surprise.

The artist would have small claim to the essential attribute of genius—viz., the intuitive sympathy of passion with passion—if that secret of Kenelm's which he had so lightly said "he had acquired the right to learn," was not revealed to him as by an electric flash. "Poor fellow!" he said to himself, pityingly; "how natural that he should fall in love with Fairy! but happily he is so young, and such a philosopher, that it is but one of those trials through which, at least ten times a-year, I have gone with wounds that leave not a scar."

Thus soliloquizing, the warm-blooded worshipper of Nature returned homeward, too blest in the triumph of his own love to feel more than a kindly compassion for the wounded heart, consigned with no doubt of the healing result to the fickleness of youth and the consolations of philosophy. Not for a moment did the happier rival suspect that Kenelm's love was returned; that an atom in the heart of the girl who had promised to be his pride could take its light or shadow from any love but his own. Yet, more from delicacy of respect to the rival so suddenly self-betrayed than from any more prudential motive, he did not speak even to Mrs. Cameron of Kenelm's secret and sorrow; and certainly neither she nor Lily was disposed to ask any question that concerned the departed visitor.

In fact the name of Kenelm Chillingly was scarcely, if at all, mentioned in that household during the few days which elapsed before Walter Melville quitted Grasmere for the banks of the Rhine, not to return till the autumn, when his marriage with Lily was to take place. During those days Lily was calm and seemingly cheerful—her manner towards her betrothed, if more subdued, not less affectionate than of old. Mrs. Cameron congratulated herself on having so successfully got rid of Kenelm Chillingly.

CHAPTER VIII.

So, then, but for that officious warning, uttered under the balcony at Luscombe, Kenelm Chillingly might never have had a rival in Walter Melville. But ill would any reader construe the character of Kenelm, did he think that such a thought increased the bitterness of his sorrow. No sorrow in the thought that a noble nature had been saved from the temptation to a great sin.

The good man does good merely by living. And the good he does may often mar the plans he formed for his own happiness. But he cannot regret that Heaven has permitted him to do good.

What Kenelm did feel is perhaps best explained in the letter to Sir Peter, which is here subjoined.

"My dearest Father,—Never till my dying day shall I forget that tender desire for my happiness with which, overcoming all worldly considerations, no matter at what disappointment to your own cherished plans or ambition for the heir to your name and race, you sent me away from your roof, these words ringing in my ear like the sound of joy-bells, 'Choose as you will, with my blessing on your choice. I open my heart to admit another child—your wife shall be my daughter.' It is such an unspeakable comfort to me to recall those words now. Of all human affections gratitude is surely the holiest; and it blends itself with the sweetness of religion when it is gratitude to a father. And, therefore, do not grieve too much for me, when I tell you that the hopes which enchanted me when we parted are not to be fulfilled. Her hand is pledged to another—another with claims upon her preference to which mine cannot be compared; and he is himself, putting aside the accidents of birth and fortune, immeasurably

my superior. In that thought—I mean the thought that the man she selects deserves her more than I do, and that in his happiness she will blend her own—I shall find comfort, so soon as I can fairly reason down the first all-engrossing selfishness that follows the sense of unexpected and irremediable loss. Meanwhile you will think it not unnatural that I resort to such aids for change of heart as are afforded by change of scene. I start for the Continent to-night, and shall not rest till I reach Venice, which I have not yet seen. I feel irresistibly attracted towards still canals and gliding gondolas. I will write to you and my dear mother the day I arrive. And I trust to write cheerfully, with full accounts of all I see and encounter. Do not, dearest father, in your letters to me revert or allude to that grief, which even the tenderest word from your own tender self might chafe into pain more sensitive. After all, a disappointed love is a very common lot. And we meet every day men—ay, and women too—who have known it, and are thoroughly cured.

"The manliest of our modern lyrical poets has said very nobly and, no doubt, very justly,

'To bear is to conquer our fate.'

"Ever your loving son,
"K. C."

CHAPTER IX.

Nearly a year and a half has elapsed since the date of my last chapter. Two Englishmen were—the one seated, the other reclined at length—on one of the mounds that furrow the ascent of Posilippo. Before them spread the noiseless sea, basking in the sunshine, without visible ripple; to the left there was a distant glimpse through gaps of brushwood of the public gardens and white water of the Chiaja. They were friends who had chanced to meet abroad—unexpectedly—joined company, and travelled together for many months, chiefly in the East. They had been but a few days in Naples. The elder of the two had important affairs in England which ought to have summoned him back long since. But he did not let his friend know this; his affairs seemed to him less important than the duties he owed to one for whom he entertained that deep and noble love which is something stronger than brotherly, for with brotherly affection it combines gratitude and reverence. He knew, too, that his friend was oppressed by a haunting sorrow, of which the cause was divined by one, not revealed by the other.

To leave him, so beloved, alone with that sorrow in strange lands, was a thought not to be cherished by a friend so tender; for in the friendship of this man there was that sort of tenderness which completes a nature thoroughly manlike, by giving it a touch of the woman's.

It was a day which in our northern climates is that of winter; in the southern clime of Naples it was mild as an English summer day, lingering on the brink of autumn. The sun sloping towards the west, and already gathering around it roseate and purple fleeces. Elsewhere the deep blue sky was without a cloudlet.

Both had been for some minutes silent; at length the man reclined on the grass—it was the younger man—said suddenly, and with no previous hint of the subject introduced, "Lay your hand on your heart, Tom, and answer me truly. Are your thoughts as clear from regrets as the heavens above us are from a cloud? Man takes regret from tears that have ceased to flow, as the heaven takes cloud from the rains that have ceased to fall."

"Regrets? Ah! I understand, for the loss of the girl I once loved to distraction! No; surely I made that clear to you many, many, many months ago, when I was your guest at Moleswich."

"Ay, but I have never, since then, spoken to you on that subject. I did not dare. It seems to me so natural that a man, in the earlier struggle between love and reason, should say, 'reason shall conquer, and has conquered;' and yet—and yet—as time glides on, feel that the conquerors who cannot put down rebellion have a very uneasy reign. Answer me not as at Molewich, during the first struggle, but now, in the after-day, when reaction from struggle comes."

"Upon my honor," answered the friend, "I have had no reaction at all. I was cured entirely, when I had once seen Jessie again, another man's wife, mother to his child, happy in her marriage; and, whether she was changed or not—very different from the sort of wife I should like to marry, now that I am no longer a village farrier."

"And, I remember, you spoke of some other girl whom it would suit you to marry. You have been long abroad from her. Do you ever think of her—think of her still as your future wife? Can you love her? Can you, who have once loved so faithfully, love again?"

"I am sure of that. I love Emily better than I did when I left England. We correspond. She writes such nice letters." Tom

hesitated, blushed, and continued timidly, "I should like to show you one of her letters."

"Do."

Tom drew forth the last of such letters from his breast pocket.

Kenelm raised himself from the grass, took the letter and read slowly, carefully, while Tom watched in vain for some approving smile to brighten up the dark beauty of that melancholy face.

Certainly it was the letter a man in love might show with pride to a friend; the letter of a lady, well educated, well brought up, evincing affection modestly, intelligence modestly too; the sort of a letter in which a mother who loved her daughter, and approved the daughter's choice, could not have suggested a correction.

As Kenelm gave back the letter, his eyes met his friend's. Those were eager eyes—eyes hungering for praise. Kenelm's heart smote him for that worst of sins in friendship—want of sympathy; and that uneasy heart forced to his lips congratulations, not perhaps quite sincere, but which amply satisfied the lover. In uttering them, Kenelm rose to his feet, threw his arm round his friend's shoulder, and said, "Are you not tired of this place, Tom? I am. Let us go back to England tomorrow." Tom's honest face brightened vividly. "How selfish and egotistical I have been!" continued Kenelm; I ought to have thought more of you, your career, your marriage—pardon me——"

"Pardon you—pardon! Don't I owe to you all—owe to you Emily herself. If you had never come to Graveleigh, never said, 'Be my friend,' what should I have been now? what—what?"

The next day the two friends quitted Naples *en route* for England, not exchanging many words by the way. The old loquacious crotchety humor of Kenelm had deserted him. A duller companion than he was you could not have conceived. He might have been the hero of a young lady's novel.

It was only when they parted in London, that Kenelm evinced more secret purpose, more external emotion than one of his heraldic Daces shifting from the bed to the surface of a waveless pond.

"If I have rightly understood you, Tom, all this change in you, all this cure of torturing regret, was wrought—wrought lastingly—wrought so as to leave you heart-free for the world's actions and a home's peace, on that eve when you saw her whose face till then had haunted you, another man's happy wife, and in so seeing her, either her face was changed, or your heart became so."

Quite true. I might express it otherwise, but the fact remains the same."

"God bless you, Tom; bless you in your career without, in your home within," said Kenelm, wringing his friend's hand at the door of the carriage that was to whirl to love, and wealth, and station, the whilom bully of a village, along the iron groove of that contrivance, which, though now the tritest of prosaic realities, seemed once too poetical for a poet's wildest visions.

CHAPTER X.

A WINTER'S evening at Moleswich. Very different from a winter sunset at Naples. It is intensely cold. There has been a slight fall of snow, accompanied with severe, bright, clear frost, a thin sprinkling of white on the pavements. Kenelm Chillingly entered the town on foot, no longer a knapsack on his back. Passing through the main street, he paused a moment at the door of Will Somers. The shop was closed. No, he would not stay there to ask in a roundabout way for news. He would go on straightforwardly and manfully to Grasmere. He would take the inmates there by surprise. The sooner he could bring Tom's experience home to himself, the better. He had schooled his heart to rely on that experience, and it brought him back the old elasticity of his stride. In his lofty carriage and buoyant face were again visible the old haughtiness of the indifferentism that keeps itself aloof from the turbulent emotions and conventional frivolities of those whom its philosophy pities and scorns.

"Ha! ha!" laughed he who like Swift never laughed aloud, and often laughed inaudibly. "Ha! ha! I shall exorcise the ghost of my grief. I shall never be haunted again. If that stormy creature whom love might have maddened into crime, if *he* were cured of love at once by a single visit to the home of her whose face was changed to him—for the smiles and the tears of it had become the property of

another man—how much more should I be left without a scar! I, the heir of Chillinglys! I, the kinsman of a Mivers! I, the pupil of a Welby! I—I, Kenelm Chillingly, to be thus—thus——" Here, in the midst of his boastful soliloquy, the well-remembered brook rushed suddenly upon eye and ear, gleaming and moaning under the wintry moon. Kenelm Chillingly stopped, covered his face with his hands, and burst into a passion of tears.

Recovering himself slowly, he went on along the path, every step of which was haunted by the form of Lily.

He reached the garden gate of Grasmere, lifted the latch, and entered. As he did so, a man, touching his hat, rushed beside, and advanced before him—the village postman. Kenelm drew back, allowing the man to pass to the door, and as he thus drew back, he caught a side view of lighted windows looking on the lawn—the windows of the pleasant drawing-room in which he had first heard Lily speak of her guardian.

The postman left his letters, and regained the garden gate, while Kenelm still stood wistfully gazing on those lighted windows. He had, meanwhile, advanced along the whitened sward to the light, saying to himself, "Let me just see her and her happiness, and then I will knock boldly at the door, and say, 'Good evening, Mrs. Melville.'"

So Kenelm stole across the lawn, and stationing himself at the angle of the wall, looked into the window.

Melville, in dressing-robe and slippers, was seated alone by the fireside. His dog was lazily stretched on the hearth-rug. One by one the features of the room, as the scene of his vanished happiness, grew out from its stillness; the delicately-tinted walls, the dwarf bookcase, with its feminine ornaments on the upper shelf; the piano standing in the same place. Lily's own small low chair; *that* was not in its old place, but thrust into a remote angle, as if it had passed into disuse. Melville was reading a letter, no doubt one of those which the postman had left. Surely the contents were pleasant, for his fair face, always frankly expressive of emotion, brightened wonderfully as he read on. Then he rose with a quick, brisk movement, and pulled the bell hastily.

A neat maid-servant entered—a strange face to Kenelm. Melville gave her some brief message. "He has had joyous news," thought Kenelm. "He has sent for his wife that she may share his joy." Presently the door opened, and entered not Lily, but Mrs. Cameron.

She looked changed. Her natural quietude of mien and movement the same, indeed, but with more languor in it. Her hair had become gray. Melville was standing by the table as she approached him. He put the letter into her hands with a gay, proud smile, and looked over her shoulder while she read it, pointing with his finger as to some lines that should more emphatically claim her attention.

When she had finished her face reflected his smile. They exchanged a hearty shake of the hand, as if in congratulation. "Ah," thought Kenelm, "the letter is from Lily. She is abroad. Perhaps the birth of a first-born."

Just then Blanche, who had not been visible before, emerged from under the table, and as Melville reseated himself by the fireside, sprang into his lap, rubbing herself against his breast. The expression of his face changed; he uttered some low exclamation. Mrs. Cameron took the creature from his lap, stroking it quietly, carried it across the room, and put it outside the door. Then she seated herself beside the artist, placing her hand in his, and they conversed in low tones, till Melville's face again grew bright, and again he took up the letter.

A few minutes later the maid-servant entered with the tea-things, and after arranging them on the table approached the window. Kenelm retreated into the shade, the servant closed the shutters and drew the curtains—that scene of quiet home comfort vanished from the eyes of the looker-on.

Kenelm felt strangely perplexed. What had become of Lily? was she indeed absent from her home? Had he conjectured rightly, that the letter which had evidently so gladdened Melville was from her, or was it possible—here a thought of joy seized his heart and held him breathless—was it possible that, after all, she had not married her guardian; had found a home elsewhere—was free? He moved on farther down the lawn, towards the water, that he might better bring before his sight that part of the irregular building in which Lily formerly had her sleeping-chamber, and her "own—own room." All was dark there; the shutters inexorably closed. The place with which the child-

like girl had associated her most childlike fancies, taming and tending the honey drinkers destined to pass into fairies, that fragile tenement was not closed against the winds and snows; its doors were drearily open; gaps in the delicate wirework; of its dainty draperies a few tattered shreds hanging here and there; and on the depopulated floor the moonbeams resting cold and ghostly. No spray from the tiny fountain; its basin chipped and mouldering; the scanty waters therein frozen. Of all the pretty wild ones that Lily fancied she could tame, not one. Ah! yes, there was one, probably not of the old familiar number; a stranger that might have crept in for shelter from the first blasts of winter, and now clung to an angle in the farther wall, its wings folded —asleep, not dead. But Kenelm saw it not; he noticed only the general desolation of the spot.

"Natural enough," thought he. "She has outgrown all such pretty silliness. A wife cannot remain a child. Still, if she had belonged to me——" The thought choked even his inward, unspoken utterance. He turned away, paused a moment under the leafless boughs of the great willow still dipping into the brook, and then with impatient steps strode back towards the garden gate.

"No—no—no. I cannot now enter that house and ask for Mrs. Melville. Trial enough for one night to stand on the old ground. I will return to the town. I will call at Jessie's, and there I can learn if she indeed be happy."

So he went on by the path along the brookside, the night momently colder and colder, and momently clearer and clearer, while the moon noiselessly glided into loftier heights. Wrapt in his abstracted thoughts, when he came to the spot in which the path split in twain he did not take that which led more directly to the town. His steps, naturally enough following the train of his thoughts, led him along the path with which the object of his thoughts was associated. He found himself on the burial-ground, and in front of the old ruined tomb with the effaced inscription.

"Ah! child—child!" he murmured almost audibly, "what depths of woman tenderness lay concealed in thee! In what loving sympathy with the past—sympathy only vouchsafed to the tenderest women and the highest poets —didst thou lay thy flowers on the tomb, to which thou didst give a poet's history interpreted by a woman's heart, little dreaming that beneath the stone slept a hero of thine own fallen race."

He passed beneath the shadow of the yews, whose leaves no winter wind can strew, and paused at the ruined tomb—no flower now on its stone, only a sprinkling of snow at the foot of it—sprinklings of snow at the foot of each humbler grave-mound. Motionless in the frosty air rested the pointed church spire, and through the frosty air, higher and higher up the arch of heaven, soared the unpausing moon. Around, and below, and above her, the stars which no science can number; yet not less difficult to number are the thoughts, desires, aspirations, which, in a space of time briefer than a winter's night, can pass through the infinite deeps of a human soul.

From his stand by the Gothic tomb, Kenelm looked along the churchyard for the infant's grave, which Lily's pious care had bordered with votive flowers. Yes, in that direction there was still a gleam of color; could it be of flowers in that biting winter time—the moon is so deceptive, it silvers into the hue of the jessamines the green of the everlastings.

He passed towards the white grave mound. His sight had duped him; no pale flower, no green "everlasting" on its neglected border—only brown mould, withered stalks, streaks of snow.

"And yet," he said sadly, "she told me she had never broken a promise; and she had given a promise to the dying child. Ah! she is too happy now to think of the dead."

So murmuring, he was about to turn towards the town, when close by that child's grave he saw another. Round that other there were pale "everlastings," dwarfed blossoms of the laurestinus; at the four angles the drooping bud of a Christmas rose; at the head of the grave was a white stone, its sharp edges cutting into the starlit air; and on the head, in fresh letters, were inscribed these words:—

To the Memory of
L. M.
Aged 17,
Died October 29, A.D. 18—,
This stone, above the grave to which her mortal remains are consigned, beside that of an infant not more sinless, is consecrated by those who most mourn and miss her,
ISABEL CAMERON,
WALTER MELVILLE.
"Suffer the little children to come unto me."

CHAPTER XI.

THE next morning Mr. Emlyn, passing from his garden to the town of Moleswich, descried a human form stretched on the burial-ground, stirring restlessly but very slightly, as if with an involuntary shiver, and uttering broken sounds, very faintly heard, like the moans that a man in pain strives to suppress and cannot.

The rector hastened to the spot. The man was lying, his face downward, on a grave-mound, not dead, not asleep.

"Poor fellow! overtaken by drink, I fear," thought the gentle pastor; and as it was the habit of his mind to compassionate error even more than grief, he accosted the supposed sinner in very soothing tones—trying to raise him from the ground—and with very kindly words.

Then the man lifted his face from its pillow on the grave-mound, looked round him dreamily into the gray, blank air of the cheerless morn, and rose to his feet quietly and slowly.

The vicar was startled; he recognized the face of him he had last seen in the magnificent affluence of health and strength. But the character of the face was changed—so changed! its old serenity of expression, at once grave and sweet, succeeded by a wild trouble in the heavy eyelids and trembling lips.

"Mr. Chillingly—you! Is it possible?"

"Varus, Varus," exclaimed Kenelm, passionately, "what hast thou done with my legions?"

At that quotation of the well-known greeting of Augustus to his unfortunate general, the scholar recoiled. Had his young friend's mind deserted him—dazed, perhaps, by over-study?

He was soon reassured; Kenelm's face settled back into calm, though a dreary calm, like that of the wintry day.

"I beg pardon, Mr. Emlyn; I had not quite shaken off the hold of a strange dream. I dreamed that I was worse off than Augustus; he did not lose the world when the legions he had trusted to another vanished into a grave."

Here Kenelm linked his arm in that of the rector—on which he leaned rather heavily—and drew him on from the burial-ground into the open space where the two paths met.

"But how long have you returned to Moleswich?" asked Emlyn; "and how come you to choose so damp a bed for your morning slumbers?"

"The wintry cold crept into my veins when I stood in the burial-ground, and I was very weary; I had no sleep at night. Do not let me take you out of your way; I am going on to Grasmere. So I see, by the record on a gravestone, that it is more than a year ago since Mr. Melville lost his wife."

"Wife? He never married."

"What!" cried Kenelm. "Whose, then, is that gravestone—'L. M.'?"

"Alas! it is our poor Lily's."

"And she died unmarried?"

As Kenelm said this he looked up, and the sun broke out from the gloomy haze of the morning. "I may claim thee, then," he thought within himself—"claim thee as mine when we meet again."

"Unmarried — yes," resumed the vicar. "She was indeed betrothed to her guardian; they were to have been married in the autumn, on his return from the Rhine. He went there to paint on the spot itself his great picture, which is now so famous—'Roland, the Hermit Knight, looking towards the convent lattice for a sight of the Holy Nun.' Melville had scarcely gone before the symptoms of the disease which proved fatal to poor Lily betrayed themselves; they baffled all medical skill—rapid decline. She was always very delicate, but no one detected in her the seeds of consumption. Melville only returned a day or two before her death. Dear childlike Lily! how we all mourned for her!—not least the poor who believed in her fairy charms."

"And least of all, it appears, the man she was to have married."

"He?—Melville? How can you wrong him so? His grief was intense—overpowering—for the time."

"For the time! what time?" muttered Kenelm, in tones too low for the pastor's ear.

They moved on silently. Mr. Emlyn resumed:

"You noticed the text on Lily's gravestone—'Suffer the little children to come unto me'? She dictated it herself the day before she died. I was with her then, so I was at the last."

"Were you—were you—at the last—the last? Good day, Mr. Emlyn; we are just in sight of the garden gate. And—excuse me—I wish to see Mr. Melville alone."

"Well, then, good day; but if you are mak-

ing any stay in the neighborhood, will you not be our guest? We have a room at your service."

"I thank you gratefully; but I return to London in an hour or so. Hold, a moment. You were with her at the last? She was resiged to die?"

"Resigned! that is scarcely the word. The smile left upon her lips was not that of human resignation; it was the smile of a divine joy."

CHAPTER XII.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Melville is at home, in his studio."

Kenelm followed the maid across the hall into a room not built at the date of Kenelm's former visits to the house: the artist, making Grasmere his chief residence after Lily's death, had added it at the back of the neglected place wherein Lily had encaged "the souls of infants unbaptized."

A lofty room, with a casement partially darkened, to the bleak north; various sketches on the walls; gaunt specimens of antique furniture, and of gorgeous Italian silks, scattered about in confused disorder; one large picture on its easel curtained; another as large, and half finished, before which stood the painter. He turned quickly, as Kenelm entered the room unannounced, let fall brush and palette, came up to him eagerly, grasped his hand, drooped his head on Kenelm's shoulder, and said, in a voice struggling with evident and strong emotion:

"Since we parted, such grief! such a loss!"

"I know it; I have seen her grave. Let us not speak of it. Why so needlessly revive your sorrow? So—so—your sanguine hopes are fulfilled—the world has at last done you justice? Emlyn tells me that you have painted a very famous picture."

Kenelm had seated himself as he thus spoke. The painter still stood with dejected attitude on the middle of the floor, and brushed his hand over his moistened eyes once or twice before he answered, "Yes, wait a moment, don't talk of fame yet. Bear with me; the sudden sight of you unnerved me."

The artist here seated himself also on an old worm-eaten Gothic chest, rumpling and chafing the golden or tinselled threads of the embroidered silk, so rare and so time-worn, flung over the Gothic chest, so rare also, and so worm-eaten.

Kenelm looked through half-closed lids at the artist, and his lips, before slightly curved with a secret scorn, became gravely compressed. In Melville's struggle to conceal emotion the strong man recognized a strong man—recognized, and yet only wondered; wondered how such a man, to whom Lily had pledged her hand, could so soon after the loss of Lily go on painting pictures, and care for any praise bestowed on a yard of canvas.

In a very few minutes Melville recommenced conversation—no more reference to Lily than if she had never existed. "Yes, my last picture has been indeed a success—a reward complete, if tardy, for all the bitterness of former struggles made in vain, for the galling sense of injustice, the anguish of which only an artist knows, when unworthy rivals are ranked before him.

'Foes quick to blame, and friends afraid to praise.'

True that I have still much to encounter; the clique still seek to disparage me, but between me and the cliques there stands at last the giant form of the public, and at last critics of graver weight than the cliques have deigned to accord to me a higher rank than even the public yet acknowledge. Ah! Mr. Chillingly, you do not profess to be a judge of paintings, but, excuse me, just look at this letter. I received it only last night from the greatest connoisseur of my art, certainly in England, perhaps in Europe." Here Melville drew, from the side pocket of his picturesque *moyen âge* surtout, a letter signed by a name authoritative to all who—being painters themselves—acknowledge authority in one who could no more paint a picture himself than Addison, the ablest critic of the greatest poem modern Europe has produced, could have written ten lines of the 'Paradise Lost'—and thrust the letter into Kenelm's hand. Kenelm read it listlessly, with an increased contempt for an artist who could so find in gratified vanity consolation for the life gone from earth. But, listlessly as he read the letter, the sincere and fervent enthusiasm of the laudatory contents impressed him, and the pre-eminent authority of the signature could not be denied.

The letter was written on the occasion of Melville's recent election to the dignity of R.A.,

successor to a very great artist whose death had created a vacancy in the Academy. He returned the letter to Melville, saying, "This is the letter I saw you reading last night as I looked in at your window. Indeed, for a man who cares for the opinion of other men, this letter is very flattering; and for the painter who cares for money, it must be very pleasant to know by how many guineas every inch of his canvas may be covered." Unable longer to control his passions of rage, of scorn, of agonizing grief, Kenelm then burst forth,—"Man, Man, whom I once accepted as a teacher on human life, a teacher to warm, to brighten, to exalt mine own indifferent, dreamy, slow-pulsed self! has not the one woman whom thou didst select out of this overcrowded world to be bone of thy bone, flesh of thy flesh, vanished evermore from the earth—little more than a year since her voice was silenced, her heart ceased to beat? But how slight is such loss to thy life, compared to the worth of a compliment that flatters thy vanity!"

The artist rose to his feet with an indignant impulse. But the angry flush faded from his cheek as he looked on the countenance of his rebuker. He walked up to him, and attempted to take his hand, but Kenelm snatched it scornfully from his grasp.

"Poor friend," said Mellville, sadly and soothingly, "I did not think you loved her thus deeply. Pardon me." He drew a chair close to Kenelm's, and after a brief pause went on thus, in very earnest tones—"I am not so heartless, not so forgetful of my loss as you suppose. But reflect, you have but just learned of her death, you are under the first shock of grief. More than a year has been given to me for gradual submission to the decrees of Heaven. Now listen to me, and try to listen calmly. I am many years older than you, I ought to know better the conditions on which man holds the tenure of life. Life is composite, many-sided, nature does not permit it to be lastingly monopolized by a single passion, or while yet in the prime of its strength, to be lastingly blighted by a single sorrow. Survey the great mass of our common race, engaged in the various callings, some the humblest, some the loftiest, by which the business of the world is carried on,—can you justly despise as heartless the poor trader or the great statesman, when, it may be but a few days after the loss of some one nearest and dearest to his heart, the trader reopens his shop, the statesman reappears in his office? But in me, the votary of art, in me you behold but the weakness of gratified vanity—if I feel joy in the hope that my art may triumph, and my country may add my name to the list of those who contribute to her renown—where and whenever lived an artist not sustained by that hope, in privation, in sickness, in the sorrows he must share with his kind? Nor is this hope that of a feminine vanity, a sicklier craving for applause; it identifies itself with glorious services to our land, to our race, to the children of all after time. Our art cannot triumph, our name cannot live, unless we achieve a something that tends to beautify or ennoble the world in which we accept the common heritage of toil and of sorrow, in order, therefrom, to work out for successive multitudes a recreation and a joy."

While the artist thus spoke Kenelm lifted towards his face eyes charged with suppressed tears. And the face, kindling as the artist vindicated himself from the young man's bitter charge, became touchingly sweet in its grave expression at the close of the not ignoble defence.

"Enough," said Kenelm, rising. "There is a ring of truth in what you say. I can conceive the artist's, the poet's escape from this world, when all therein is death and winter, into the world he creates and colors at his will with the hues of summer. So, too, I can conceive how the man whose life is sternly fitted into the grooves of a trader's calling, or a statesman's duties, is borne on by the force of custom, afar from such brief halting-spot as a grave. But I am no poet, no artist, no trader, no statesman; I have no calling, my life is fixed into no grooves. Adieu."

"Hold a moment. Not now, but somewhat later, ask yourself whether any life can be permitted to wander in space, a monad detached from the lives of others. Into some groove or other, sooner or later, it must settle, and be borne on obedient to the laws of nature and the responsibility to God."

CHAPTER XIII.

Kenelm went back alone, and with downcast looks, through the desolate flowerless garden,

when at the other side of the gate a light touch was laid on his arm. He looked up, and recognized Mrs. Cameron.

"I saw you," she said, "from my window coming to the house, and I have been waiting for you here. I wished to speak to you alone. Allow me to walk beside you."

Kenelm inclined his head assentingly, but made no answer.

They were nearly midway between the cottage and the burial-ground when Mrs. Cameron resumed, her tones quick and agitated, contrasting her habitual languid quietude—

"I have a great weight on my mind; it ought not to be remorse. I acted as I thought in my conscience for the best. But oh, Mr. Chillingly, if I erred—if I judged wrongly—do say at least you forgive me." She seized his hand, pressing it convulsively. Kenelm muttered inaudibly—a sort of dreary stupor had succeeded to the intense excitement of grief. Mrs. Cameron went on—

"You could not have married Lily—you know you could not. The secret of her birth could not, in honor, have been concealed from your parents. They could not have consented to your marriage; and even if you had persisted, without that consent and in spite of that secret, to press for it—even had she been yours——"

"Might she not be living now?" cried Kenelm, fiercely.

"No—no; the secret must have come out. The cruel world would have discovered it; it would have reached her ears. The shame of it would have killed her. How bitter then would have been her short interval of life! As it is, she passed away—resigned and happy. But I own that I did not, could not, understand her, could not believe her feeling for you to be so deep. I did think, that when she knew her own heart, she would find that love for her guardian was its strongest affection. She assented, apparently without a pang, to become his wife; and she seemed always so fond of him, and what girl would not be? But I was mistaken—deceived. From the day you saw her last, she began to fade away; but then Walter left a few days after, and I thought that it was his absence she mourned. She never owned to me that it was yours—never till too late—too late—just when my sad letter had summoned him back, only three days before she died. Had I known earlier while yet there was hope of recovery, I must have written to you, even though the obstacles to your union with her remained the same. Oh, again I implore you, say that if I erred you forgive me. She did, kissing me so tenderly. She did forgive me. Will not you? It would have been her wish."

"Her wish? Do you think I could disobey it? I know not if I have anything to forgive. If I have, how could I not forgive one who loved her? God comfort us both."

He bent down and kissed Mrs. Cameron's forehead. The poor woman threw her arm gratefully, lovingly round him, and burst into tears.

When she had recovered her emotion, she said—"And now, it is with so much lighter a heart that I can fulfil her commission to you. But, before I place this in your hands, can you make me one promise? Never tell Melville how she loved you. She was so careful he should never guess that. And if he knew it was the thought of union with him which had killed her, he would never smile again."

"You would not ask such a promise if you could guess how sacred from all the world I hold the secret that you confide to me. By that secret the grave is changed into an altar. Our bridals now are only awhile deferred."

Mrs. Cameron placed a letter in Kenelm's hand, and murmuring in accents broken by a sob, "She gave it to me the day before her last," left him, and with quick vacillating steps hurried back towards the cottage. She now understood *him*, at last, too well not to feel that on opening that letter he must be alone with the dead.

It is strange that we need have so little practical household knowledge of each other to be in love. Never till then had Kenelm's eyes rested upon Lily's handwriting. And he now gazed at the formal address on the envelope with a sort of awe. Unknown handwriting coming to him from an unknown world—delicate, tremulous handwriting—handwriting not of one grown up, yet not of a child who had long to live.

He turned the envelope over and over—not impatiently, as does the lover whose heart beats at the sound of the approaching footstep, but lingeringly, timidly. He would not break the seal.

He was now so near the burial-ground. Where should the first letter ever received from her—the sole letter he ever could receive—be so reverentially, lovingly read, as at her grave?

He walked on to the burial-ground, sat down by the grave, broke the envelope; a poor little ring, with a poor little single turquoise, rolled out and rested at his feet. The letter contained only these words:

"The ring comes back to you. I could not live to marry another. I never knew how I loved you—till, till I began to pray that you might not love me too much. Darling! darling! good-bye, darling!

"LILY.

"Don't let Lion ever see this, or ever know what it says to you. He is so good, and deserves to be so happy. Do you remember the day of the ring? Darling! darling!"

CHAPTER XIV.

SOMEWHAT more than another year has rolled away. It is early spring in London. The trees in the parks and squares are budding into leaf and blossom. Leopold Travers has had a brief but serious conversation with his daughter, and is now gone forth on horseback. Handsome and graceful still, Leopold Travers when in London is pleased to find himself scarcely less the fashion with the young than he was when himself in youth. He is now riding along the banks of the Serpentine, no one better mounted, better dressed, better looking, or talking with greater fluency on the topics which interest his companions.

Cecilia is in the smaller drawing-room, which is exclusively appropriated to her use—alone with Lady Glenalvon.

LADY GLENALVON.—"I own, my dear, dear Cecilia, that I arrange myself at last on the side of your father. How earnestly at one time I had hoped that Kenelm Chillingly might woo and win the bride that seemed to me most fitted to adorn and to cheer his life, I need not say. But when at Exmundham he asked me to befriend his choice of another, to reconcile his mother to that choice—evidently not a suitable one—I gave him up. And though that affair is at an end, he seems little likely ever to settle down to practical duties and domestic habits, an idle wanderer over the face of the earth, only heard of in remote places and with strange companions. Perhaps he may never return to England."

CECILIA.—"He is in England now, and in London."

LADY GLENALVON.—"You amaze me! Who told you so?"

CECILIA.—"His father, who is with him. Sir Peter called yesterday, and spoke to me so kindly." Cecilia here turned aside her face to conceal the tears that had started to her eyes.

LADY GLENALVON.—"Did Mr. Travers see Sir Peter?"

CECILIA.—"Yes; and I think it was something that passed between them which made my father speak to me—for the first time—almost sternly."

LADY GLENALVON.—"In urging Gordon Chillingly's suit."

CECILIA.—"Commanding me to reconsider my rejection of it. He has contrived to fascinate my father."

LADY GLENALVON.—"So he has me. Of course you might choose among other candidates for your hand one of much higher worldly rank, of much larger fortune, yet, as you have already rejected them, Gordon's merits become still more entitled to a fair hearing. He has already leapt into a position that mere rank and mere wealth cannot attain. Men of all parties speak highly of his parliamentary abilities. He is already marked in public opinion as a coming man—a future minister of the highest grade. He has youth and good looks, his moral character is without a blemish, yet his manners are so free from affected austerity, so frank, so genial. Any woman might be pleased with his companionship; and you, with your intellect, your culture,—you, so born for high station,—you of all women might be proud to partake the anxieties of his career, and the rewards of his ambition."

CECILIA (clasping her hands tightly together).—"I cannot, I cannot. He may be all you say—I know nothing against Mr. Chillingly Gordon—but my whole nature is antagonistic to his, and even were it not so——"

She stopped abruptly, a deep blush warming up her fair face, and retreating to leave it coldly pale.

LADY GLENALVON (tenderly kissing her).—"You have not, then, even yet conquered the

first maiden fancy; the ungrateful one is still remembered?"

Cecilia bowed her head on her friend's breast, and murmured imploringly, "Don't speak against him, he has been so unhappy. How much he must have loved!"

"But it is not you whom he loved."

"Something here, something at my heart, tells me that he will love me yet; and if not, I am contented to be his friend."

CHAPTER XV.

While the conversation just related took place between Cecilia and Lady Glenalvon, Gordon Chillingly was seated alone with Mivers in the comfortable apartment of the cynical old bachelor. Gordon had breakfasted with his kinsman, but that meal was long over; the two men having found much to talk about on matters very interesting to the younger, nor without interest to the elder one.

It is true that Chillingly Gordon had, within the very short space of time that had elapsed since his entrance into the House of Commons, achieved one of those reputations which mark out a man for early admission into the progressive career of office—not a very showy reputation, but a very solid one. He had none of the gifts of the genuine orator, no enthusiasm, no imagination, no imprudent bursts of fiery words from a passionate heart. But he had all the gifts of an exceedingly telling speaker—a clear metallic voice; well-bred, appropriate action, not less dignified for being somewhat too quiet; readiness for extempore replies; industry and method for prepared expositions of principle or fact. But his principal merit with the chiefs of the assembly was in the strong good sense and worldly tact which made him a safe speaker. For this merit he was largely indebted to his frequent conferences with Chillingly Mivers. That gentleman, owing whether to his social qualities or to the influence of the 'Londoner' on public opinion, enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with the chiefs of all parties, and was up to his ears in the wisdom of the world. "Nothing," he would say, "hurts a young Parliamentary speaker like violence in opinion, one way or the other. Shun it. Always allow that much may be said on both sides. When the chiefs of your own side suddenly adopt a violence, you can go with them or against them, according as best suits your own book."

"So," said Mivers, reclined on his sofa, and approaching the end of his second Trabuco (he never allowed himself more than two), "so I think we have pretty well settled the tone you must take in your speech to-night. It is a great occasion."

"True. It is the *first* time in which the debate has been arranged so that I may speak at ten o'clock or later. That in itself is a great leap; and it is a Cabinet minister whom I am to answer—luckily, he is a very dull fellow. Do you think I might hazard a joke—at least a witticism?"

"At his expense? Decidedly not. Though his office compels him to introduce this measure, he was by no means in its favor when it was discussed in the Cabinet; and though, as you say, he is dull, it is precisely that sort of dulness which is essential to the formation of every respectable Cabinet. Joke at *him*, indeed! Learn that gentle dulness never loves a joke—at its own expense. Vain man! seize the occasion which your blame of his measure affords you to secure his praise of yourself; compliment him. Enough of politics. It never does to think too much over what one has already decided to say. Brooding over it, one may become too much in earnest, and commit an indiscretion. So Kenelm has come back?"

"Yes. I heard that news last night, at White's, from Travers. Sir Peter had called on Travers."

"Travers still favors your suit to the heiress?"

"More, I think, than ever. Success in Parliament has great effect on a man who has success in fashion and respects the opinion of clubs. But last night he was unusually cordial. Between you and me, I think he is a little afraid that Kenelm may yet be my rival. I gathered that from a hint he let fall of the unwelcome nature of Sir Peter's talk to him."

"Why has Travers conceived a dislike to poor Kenelm? He seemed partial enough to him once."

"Ay, but not as a son-in-law, even before I had a chance of becoming so. And when, after Kenelm appeared at Exmundham while Travers was staying there, Travers learned, I suppose

from Lady Chillingly, that Kenelm had fallen in love with and wanted to marry some other girl, who it seems rejected him, and still more when he heard that Kenelm had been subsequently travelling on the Continent in company with a low-lived fellow, the drunken, riotous son of a farrier, you may well conceive how so polished and sensible a man as Leopold Travers would dislike the idea of giving his daughter to one so little likely to make an agreeable son-in-law. Bah ! I have no fear of Kenelm. By the way, did Sir Peter say if Kenelm had quite recovered his health ? He was at death's door some eighteen months ago, when Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly were summoned to town by the doctors."

"My dear Gordon, I fear there is no chance of your succession to Exmundham. Sir Peter says that his wandering Hercules is as stalwart as ever, and more equable in temperament, more taciturn and grave—in short, less odd. But when you say you have no fear of Kenelm's rivalry, do you mean only as to Cecilia Travers ?"

"Neither as to that nor as to anything in life; and as to the succession to Exmundham, it is his to leave as he pleases, and I have cause to think he would never leave it to me. More likely to Parson John or the parson's son—or why not to yourself ? I often think that for the prizes immediately set before my ambition I am better off without land: land is a great obfuscator."

"Humph, there is some truth in that. Yet the fear of land and obfuscation does not seem to operate against your suit to Cecilia Travers ?"

"Her father is likely enough to live till I may be contented to 'rest and be thankful' in the upper house; and I should not like to be a landless peer."

"You are right there; but I should tell you that, now Kenelm has come back, Sir Peter has set his heart on his son's being your rival."

"For Cecilia ?"

"Perhaps; but certainly for Parliamentary reputation. The senior member for the county means to retire, and Sir Peter has been urged to allow his son to be brought forward—from what I hear, with the certainty of success."

"What ! in spite of that wonderful speech of his on coming of age ?"

"Pooh ! that is now understood to have been but a bad joke on the new ideas, and their organs, including the 'Londoner.' But if Kenelm does come into the House, it will not be on your side of the question; and unless I greatly overrate his abilities—which very likely I do—he will not be a rival to despise. Except, indeed, that he may have one fault which in the present day would be enough to unfit him for public life."

"And what is that fault ?"

"Treason to the blood of the Chillinglys. This is the age, in England, when one cannot be too much of a Chillingly. I fear that if Kenelm does become bewildered by a political abstraction—call it, no matter what, say, 'love of his country,' or some such old-fashioned crotchet—I fear—I greatly fear—that he may be—in earnest."

CHAPTER THE LAST.

It was a field night in the House of Commons—an adjourned debate opened by George Belvoir, who had been, the last two years, very slowly creeping on in the favor, or rather the indulgence of the House, and more than justifying Kenelm's prediction of his career. Heir to a noble name and vast estates, extremely hard-working, very well informed, it was impossible that he should not creep on. That night he spoke sensibly enough, assisting his memory by frequent references to his notes; listened to courteously, and greeted with a faint "Hear, hear !" of relief when he had done.

Then the House gradually thinned till nine o'clock, at which hour it became very rapidly crowded. A cabinet minister had solemnly risen, deposited on the table before him a formidable array of printed papers, including a corpulent blue-book. Leaning his arm on the red box, he commenced with this awe-compelling sentence:

"Sir,—I join issue with the right honorable gentleman opposite. He says this is not raised as a party question. I deny it. Her Majesty's Government are put upon their trial."

Here there were cheers, so loudly, and so rarely greeting a speech from that cabinet minister, that he was put out, and had much to "hum" and to "ha," before he could recover the thread of his speech. Then he went on,

with unbroken but lethargic fluency; read long extracts from the public papers, inflicted a whole page from the blue book, wound up with a peroration of respectable platitudes, glanced at the clock, saw that he had completed the hour which a cabinet minister who does not profess to be oratorical is expected to speak, but not to exceed; and sat down.

Up rose a crowd of eager faces, from which the Speaker, as previously arranged with the party whips, selected one—a young face, hardy, intelligent, emotionless.

I need not say that it was the face of Chillingly Gordon.

His position that night was one that required dexterous management and delicate tact. He habitually supported the Government; his speeches had been hitherto in their favor. On this occasion he differed from the Government. The difference was known to the chiefs of the Opposition, and hence the arrangement of the whips, that he should speak for the first time after ten o'clock, and for the first time in reply to a cabinet minister. It is a position in which a young party man makes or mars his future. Chillingly Gordon spoke from the third row behind the Government; he had been duly cautioned by Mivers not to affect a conceited independence, or an adhesion to "violence" in ultra-liberal opinions, by seating himself below the gangway. Speaking thus, amid the rank and file of the Ministerial supporters, any opinion at variance with the mouthpieces of the Treasury Bench would be sure to produce a more effective sensation than if delivered from the ranks of the mutinous Bashi Bazouks divided by the gangway from better disciplined forces. His first brief sentences enthralled the House, conciliated the Ministerial side, kept the Opposition side in suspense. The whole speech was, indeed, felicitously adroit, and especially in this, that while in opposition to the Government as a whole, it expressed the opinions of a powerful section of the cabinet, which, though at present a minority, yet being the most enamored of a New Idea, the progress of the age would probably render a safe investment for the confidence which honest Gordon reposed in its chance of beating its colleagues.

It was not, however, till Gordon had concluded, that the cheers of his audience—impulsive and hearty as are the cheers of that assembly, when the evidence of intellect is unmistakable—made manifest to the gallery and the reporters the full effect of the speech he had delivered. The chief of the Opposition whispered to his next neighbor, "I wish we could get that man." The cabinet minister whom Gordon had answered—more pleased with a personal compliment to himself than displeased with an attack on the measure his office compelled him to advocate—whispered to his chief, "That is a man we must not lose."

Two gentlemen in the Speaker's gallery, who had sat there from the opening of the debate, now quitted their places. Coming into the lobby, they found themselves commingled with a crowd of members who had also quitted their seats, after Gordon's speech, in order to discuss its merits, as they gathered round the refreshment table for oranges or soda-water. Among them was George Belvoir, who, on sight of the younger of the two gentlemen issuing from the Speaker's gallery, accosted him with friendly greeting:

"Ha! Chillingly, how are you? Did not know you were in town. Been here all the evening? Yes; very good debate. How did you like Gordon's speech?"

"I liked yours much better."

"Mine!" cried George, very much flattered and very much surprised. "Oh! mine was a mere humdrum affair, a plain statement of the reasons for the vote I should give. And Gordon's was anything but that. You did not like his opinions?"

"I don't know what his opinions are. But I did not like his ideas."

"I don't quite understand you. What ideas?"

"The new ones; by which it is shown how rapidly a great state can be made small."

Here Mr. Belvoir was taken aside by a brother member, on an important matter to be brought before the committee on salmon fisheries, on which they both served; and Kenelm, with his companion, Sir Peter, threaded his way through the crowded lobby, and disappeared. Emerging into the broad space, with its lofty clock tower, Sir Peter halted, and pointing towards the old Abbey, half in shadow half in light, under the tranquil moonbeams, said:

"It tells much for the duration of a people, when it accords with the instinct of immortality in a man; when an honored tomb is deemed

recompense for the toils and dangers of a noble life. How much of the history of England, Nelson summed up in the simple words—'Victory or Westminster Abbey.'"

"Admirably expressed, my dear father," said Kenelm, briefly.

"I agree with your remark, which I overheard, on Gordon's speech," resumed Sir Peter. "It was wonderfully clever; yet I should have been sorry to hear you speak it. It is not by such sentiments that Nelsons become great. If such sentiments should ever be national, the cry will not be 'Victory or Westminster Abbey!' but 'Defeat and the Three per Cents!'"

Pleased with his own unwonted animation, and with the sympathizing half-smile on his son's taciturn lips, Sir Peter then proceeded more immediately to the subjects which pressed upon his heart. Gordon's success in Parliament, Gordon's suit to Cecilia Travers, favored, as Sir Peter had learned, by her father, rejected as yet by herself, were somehow inseparably mixed up in Sir Peter's mind and his words, as he sought to kindle his son's emulation. He dwelt on the obligations which a country imposed on its citizens, especially on the young and vigorous generation to which the destinies of those to follow were intrusted; and with these stern obligations he combined all the cheering and tender associations which an English public man connects with an English home: the wife with a smile to soothe the cares, and a mind to share the aspirations, of a life that must go through labor to achieve renown; thus, in all he said, binding together, as if they could not be disparted, Ambition and Cecilia.

His son did not interrupt him by a word: Sir Peter in his eagerness not noticing that Kenelm had drawn him aside from the direct thoroughfare, and had now made halt in the middle of Westminster Bridge, bending over the massive parapet and gazing abstractedly upon the waves of the starlit river. On the right the stately length of the people's legislative palace, so new in its date, so elaborately in each detail ancient in its form, stretching on towards the lowly and jagged roofs of penury and crime. Well might these be so near to the halls of a people's legislative palace;—near to the heart of every legislator for a people must be the mighty problem how to increase a people's splendor and its virtue, and how to diminish its penury and its crime.

"How strange it is," said Kenelm, still bending over the parapet, "that throughout all my desultory wanderings I have ever been attracted towards the sight and the sound of running waters, even those of the humblest rill! Of what thoughts, of what dreams, of what memories, coloring the history of my past, the waves of the humblest rill could speak, were the waves themselves not such supreme philosophers—roused indeed on their surface, vexed by a check to their own course, but so indifferent to all that makes gloom or death to the mortals who think and dream and feel beside their banks."

"Bless me," said Peter to himself, "the boy has got back to his old vein of humors and melancholies. He has not heard a word I have been saying. Travers is right. He will never do anything in life. Why did I christen him Kenelm? he might as well have been christened Peter." Still, loth to own that his eloquence had been expended in vain, and that the wish of his heart was doomed to expire disappointed, Sir Peter said aloud, "You have not listened to what I said; Kenelm, you grieve me."

"Grieve you! you! do not say that, father, dear father. Listen to you! Every word you have said has sunk into the deepest deep of my heart. Pardon my foolish, purposeless snatch of talk to myself—it is but my way, only my way, dear father!"

"Boy, boy," cried Sir Peter, with tears in his voice, "if you could get out of those odd ways of yours I should be so thankful. But if you cannot, nothing you can do shall grieve me. Only, let me say this; running waters have had a great charm for you. With a humble rill you associate thoughts, dreams, memories in your past. But now you halt by the stream of the mighty river—before you the senate of an empire wider than Alexander's; behind you the market of a commerce to which that of Tyre was a pitiful trade. Look farther down, those squalid hovels, how much there to redeem or to remedy; and out of sight, but not very distant, the nation's Walhalla: 'Victory or Westminster Abbey!' The humble rill has witnessed your past. Has the mighty river no effect on your future? The rill keeps no record of your past, shall the river keep no record of your future? Ah, boy, boy, I see you are dreaming still—no use talking. Let us go home."

"I was not dreaming, I was telling myself that the time had come to replace the old Kenelm with the new ideas, by a New Kenelm with the Ideas of Old. Ah! perhaps we must —at whatever cost to ourselves,—we must go through the romance of life before we clearly detect what is grand in its realities. I can no longer lament that I stand estranged from the objects and pursuits of my race. I have learned how much I have with them in common. I have known love; I have known sorrow."

Kenelm paused a moment, only a moment, then lifted the head which, during that pause, had drooped, and stood erect at the full height of his stature, startling his father by the change that had passed over his face; lip—eye—his whole aspect eloquent with a resolute enthusiasm, too grave to be the flash of a passing moment.

"Ay, ay," he said, "Victory or Westminster Abbey! The world is a battle-field in which the worst wounded are the deserters, stricken as they seek to fly, and hushing the groans that would betray the secret of their inglorious hiding-place. The pain of wounds received in the thick of the fight is scarcely felt in the joy of service to some honored cause, and is amply atoned by the reverence for noble scars. My choice is made. Not that of deserter, that of soldier in the ranks."

"It will not be long before you rise from the ranks, my boy, if you hold fast to the Idea of Old, symbolized in the English battle-cry—'Victory or Westminster Abbey.'"

So saying, Sir Peter took his son's arm, leaning on it proudly; and so, into the crowded thoroughfares, from the halting-place on the modern bridge that spans the legendary river, passes the Man of the Young Generation to fates beyond the verge of the horizon to which the eyes of *my* generation must limit their wistful gaze.

END OF "KENELM CHILLINGLY."

DEVEREUX.

DEDICATORY EPISTLE

To JOHN AULDJO, Esq., Etc.

AT NAPLES.

London.

My dear Auldjo,

Permit me, as a memento of the pleasant hours we passed together, and the intimacy we formed, by the winding shores and the rosy seas of the old Parthenope, to dedicate to you this romance.—It was written in, perhaps, the happiest period of my literary life—when success began to brighten upon my labors, and it seemed to me a fine thing to make a name. Reputation, like all possessions, fairer in the hope than the reality, shone before me, in the gloss of novelty—and I had neither felt the envy it excites, the weariness it occasions, nor (worse than all) that coarse and painful notoriety, that something between the gossip and the slander, which attends every man whose writings become known—surrendering the grateful privacies of life to

The gaudy, babbling, and remorseless day.

In short—yet almost a boy—(for, in years at least, I was little more, when "Pelham" and "The Disowned" were conceived and composed,) and full of the sanguine arrogance of hope, I pictured to myself far greater triumphs than it will ever be mine to achieve: and never did architect of dreams build his pyramid upon (alas!) a narrower base, or a more crumbling soil! . . . . . Time cures us effectually of these self-conceits, and brings us, somewhat harshly, from the gay extravagance of confounding the much that we design with the little that we can accomplish.

"The Disowned" and "Devereux" were both completed in retirement—and in the midst of metaphysical studies and investigations, varied and miscellaneous enough, if not very deeply conned.—At that time I was indeed engaged in preparing for the press a Philosophical Work, which I had afterwards the good sense to postpone to a riper age and a more sobered mind. But the effect of these studies is somewhat prejudicially visible in both the romances I have referred to; and the external and dramatic colorings which belong to fiction are too often forsaken for the inward and subtle analysis of motives, characters, and actions.—The workman was not sufficiently master of his art to forbear the vanity of parading the wheels of the mechanism, and was too fond of calling attention to the minute and tedious operations by which the movements were to be performed, and the result obtained. I believe that an author is generally pleased with his work, less in proportion as it is good, than in proportion as it fulfils the idea with which he commenced it. He is rarely, perhaps, an accurate judge how far the execution is in itself faulty or meritorious—but he judges with tolerable success how far it accomplishes the end and objects of the conception.—He is pleased with his work, in short, according as he can say, "This has expressed what I meant it to convey."—But the reader, who is not in the secret of the author's original design, usually views the work through a different medium—and is perhaps, in this, the wiser critic of the two; for the Book that wanders the most from the idea which originated it, may often be better than that which is rigidly limited to the unfolding and *dénouement* of a single conception. If we accept this solution, we may be enabled to understand why an author not unfrequently makes favorites of some of his productions most condemned by the public. For my own part, I remember that "Devereux" pleased

DEVEREUX.

me better than "Pelham" or "The Disowned," because the execution more exactly corresponded with the design. It expressed with tolerable fidelity what I meant it to express.' That was a happy age, my dear Auldjo, when, on finishing a work, we could feel contented with our labor, and fancy we had done our best! Now, alas! I have learned enough of the wonders of the Art to recognize all the deficiencies of the Disciple; and to know that no author, worth the reading—can ever in one single work do half of which he is capable.

What man ever wrote anything really good, who did not feel that he had the ability to write something better?—Writing, after all, is a cold and a coarse interpreter of thought.—How much of the imagination—how much of the intellect, evaporates and is lost while we seek to embody it in words!—Man made language, and God the genius. Nothing short of an eternity could enable men who imagine, think, and feel, to express *all* they have imagined, thought, and felt. Immortality, the spiritual desire, is the intellectual *necessity*.

In "Devereux," I wished to portray a man flourishing in the last century, with the train of mind and sentiment peculiar to the present;—describing a life, and not its dramatic epitome, the historical characters introduced are not closely woven with the main plot, like those in the fictions of Sir Walter Scott—but are rather, like the narrative romances of an earlier school, designed to relieve the predominant interest, and give a greater air of truth and actuality to the supposed memoir. It is a fiction which deals less with the Picturesque than the Real.—Of the principal character thus introduced (the celebrated and graceful, but charlatanic, Bolingbroke) I still think that my sketch, upon the whole, is substantially just. We must not judge of the politicians of one age by the lights of another. Happily we now demand in a statesman a desire for other aims than his own advancement; but, at that period, ambition was almost universally selfish—the Statesman was yet a Courtier—a man whose very destiny it was to intrigue, to plot, to glitter, to deceive. It is in proportion as politics have ceased to be a secret science—in proportion as courts are less to be flattered, and tools to be managed, that politicians have become useful and honest men: and the statesman now directs a people, where once he outwitted an antichamber. Compare Bolingbroke—not with the men and by the rules of this day—but with the men and by the rules of the last. He will lose nothing in comparison with a Walpole, with a Marlborough, on the one side—with an Oxford or a Swift, upon the other.

And now, my dear Auldjo—you have had enough of my egotisms. As our works grow up—like old parents, we grow garrulous, and love to recur to the happier days of their childhood;—we talk over the pleasant pain they cost us in their rearing—and memory renews the season of dreams and hopes: we speak of their faults as of things past—of their merits as of things enduring:—we are proud to see them still living, and, after many a harsh ordeal and rude assault, keeping a certain station in the world;—we hoped perhaps something better for them in their cradle—but, as it is, we have good cause to be contented. You, a fellow-author, and one whose spirited and charming sketches embody so much of personal adventure, and therefore so much connect themselves with associations of real life as well as of the studious closet; *you* know, and must feel, with me, that these our books are a part of us, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh! They treasure up the thoughts which stirred us—the affections which warmed us, years ago—they are the mirrors of how much of what we were! To the world, they are but as a certain number of pages—good or bad—tedious or diverting; but to ourselves, the authors, they are as marks in the wild maze of life by which we can retrace our steps—and be with our youth again. What would I not give to feel as I felt—to hope as I hoped—to believe as I believed—when this work was first launched upon the world! But time gives, while it takes away—and, amongst its recompenses for many losses, are the memories I referred to in commencing this letter, and gratefully revert to at its close.—From the land of cloud and the life of toil, I turn to that golden clime and the happy indolence that so well accords with it—and hope once more, ere I die, with a companion whose knowledge can recall the past, and whose gaiety can enliven the present, to visit the Disburied City of Pompeii—and see the moonlight sparkle over the waves of Naples. Adieu, my dear Auldjo,

And believe me
Your obliged and attached friend,
E. B. Lytton.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHER'S INTRODUCTION.

My life has been one of frequent adventure and constant excitement. It has been passed, to this present day, in a stirring age, and not without acquaintance of the most eminent and active spirits of the time. Men of all grades, and of every character, have been familiar to me. War—love—ambition—the scroll of sages—the festivals of wit—the intrigues of states—all that agitate mankind, the hope and the fear, the labor and the pleasure—the great drama of vanities, with the little interludes of wisdom; these have been the occupations of my manhood;—these will furnish forth the materials of that history which is now open to your survey. Whatever be the faults of the historian, he has no motive to palliate what he has committed, nor to conceal what he has felt.

Children of an after century—the very time in which these pages will greet you destroys enough of the connection between you and myself, to render me indifferent alike to your censure and your applause. Exactly one hundred years from the day this record is completed will the seal I shall place on it be broken, and the secrets it contains be disclosed. I claim that congeniality with you which I have found not among my own coevals. *Their* thoughts, their feelings, their views, have nothing kindred to my own. I speak their language, but it is not as a native—*they* know not a syllable of *mine!* With a future age my heart may have more in common—to a future age my thoughts may be less unfamiliar, and my sentiments less strange; I trust these confessions to the trial!

Children of an after century, between you and the being who has traced the pages ye behold—that busy, versatile, restless being—there is but one step—but that step is a century! His *now* is separated from your *now*, by an interval of three generations! While He writes, he is exulting in the vigor of health and manhood—while ye read, the very worms are starving upon his dust. This commune between the living and the dead—this intercourse between that which breathes and moves, and *is*—and that which life animates not, nor mortality knows—annihilates falsehood, and chills even self-delusion into awe. Come, then, and look upon the picture of a past day, and of a gone being, without apprehension of deceit—and as the shadows and lights of a checkered and wild existence flit before you—watch if, in your own hearts, there be aught which mirrors the reflection.

Morton Devereux.

NOTE TO THE PRESENT EDITION, 1852.

If this work possess any merit of a Narrative order, it will perhaps be found in its fidelity to the characteristics of an Autobiography. The reader must, indeed, comply with the condition exacted from his imagination and faith—that is to say, he must take the hero of the story upon the terms for which Morton Devereux himself stipulates; and regard the supposed Count as one who lived and wrote in the last century, but who (dimly conscious that the tone of his mind harmonized less with his own age than with that which was to come) left his biography as a legacy to the present. This assumption (which is not an unfair one), liberally conceded, and allowed to account for occasional anachronisms in sentiment, Morton Devereux will be found to write, as a man who is not constructing a romance, but narrating a life. He gives to Love, its joy and its sorrow, its due share in an eventful and passionate existence: but it is the share of biography, not of fiction. He selects from the crowd of personages with whom he is brought into contact, not only those who directly influence his personal destinies, but those of whom a sketch or an anecdote would appear to a biographer likely to have interest for posterity. Louis XIV., the Regent Orleans, Peter the Great, Lord Bolingbroke, and others less eminent, but still of mark in their own day, if growing obscure to ours, are introduced not for the purposes and agencies of fiction, but as an autobiographer's natural illustrations of the men and manners of his time.

And here be it pardoned if I add that so minute an attention has been paid to accuracy, that even in petty details, and in relation to historical characters but slightly known to the ordinary reader, a critic deeply acquainted with the memoirs of the age will allow that the novelist is always merged in the narrator.

Unless the Author has failed more in his

design, than, on revising the work of his early youth with the comparatively impartial eye of maturer judgment, he is disposed to concede —Morton Devereux will also be found with that marked individuality of character which distinguishes the man who has lived and labored, from the hero of romance. He admits into his life but few passions—those are tenacious and intense; conscious that none who are around him will sympathize with his deeper feelings he veils them under the sneer of an irony which is often affected and never mirthful. Wherever we find him, after surviving the brief episode of love, we feel—though he does not tell us so—that he is alone in the world. He is represented as a keen observer and a successful actor in the busy theatre of mankind, precisely in proportion as no cloud from the heart obscures the cold clearness of the mind. In the scenes of pleasure there is no joy in his smile; in the contests of ambition there is no quicker beat of the pulse. Attaining in the prime of manhood such position and honor as would first content and then sate a man of this mould, he has nothing left but to discover the vanities of this world, and to ponder on the hopes of the next; and, his last passion dying out in the retribution that falls on his foe, he finally sits down in retirement to rebuild the ruined home of his youth,—unconscious that to that solitude the Destinies have led him to repair the waste and ravages of his own melancholy soul.

But while outward Dramatic harmonies between cause and effect, and the proportionate agencies which characters introduced in the Drama bring to bear upon event and catastrophe, are carefully shunned—as real life does for the most part shun them—yet there is a latent coherence in all that, by influencing the mind, do, though indirectly, shape out the fate and guide the actions.

Dialogue and adventures which, considered dramatically, would be episodical,—considered biographically, will be found essential to the formation, change, and development of the narrator's character. The grave conversations with Bolingbroke and Richard Cromwell, the light scenes in London and at Paris, the favor obtained with the Czar of Russia, are all essential to the creation of that mixture of wearied satiety and mournful thought which conducts the Probationer to the lonely spot in which he is destined to learn at once the mystery of his past life, and to clear his reason from the doubts that had obscured the future world.

Viewing the work in this more subtle and contemplative light, the reader will find not only the true test by which to judge of its design and nature, but he may also recognize sources of interest in the story which might otherwise have been lost to him; and, if so, the Author will not be without excuse for this criticism upon the scope and intention of his own work. For it is not only the privilege of an artist, but it is also sometimes his duty to the principles of Art, to place the spectator in that point of view wherein the light best falls upon the canvas. "Do not place yourself there:" says the painter, "To judge of my composition you must stand where I place you."

BOOK FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Hero's Birth and Parentage. Nothing can differ more from the End of Things than their Beginning.

My grandfather, Sir Arthur Devereux, (peace be with his ashes !) was a noble old knight and cavalier, possessed of a property sufficiently large to have maintained in full dignity half a dozen peers—such as peers have been since the days of the First James. Nevertheless, my grandfather loved the equestrian order better than the patrician, rejected all offers of advancement, and left his posterity no titles but those to his estate.

Sir Arthur had two children by wedlock—both sons; at his death, my father, the younger, bade adieu to the old hall and his only brother, prayed to the grim portraits of his ancestors to inspire him, and set out—to join as a volunteer the armies of that *Louis*, afterwards surnamed *le grand.* Of him I shall say but little; the life of a soldier has only two events worth recording, his first campaign and his last. My uncle did as his ancestors had done before him, and, cheap as the dignity had grown, went up to court to be knighted by Charles II. He was so delighted with what he saw of the metropolis that he forswore all intention of leaving it, took to Sedley and champagne, flirted with Nell Gwynne, lost double the value of his brother's portion at one sitting to the chivalrous Grammont, wrote a comedy corrected by Etherege, and took a wife recommended by Rochester. The wife brought him a child six months after marriage, and the infant was born on the same day the comedy was acted. Luckily for the honor of the house, my uncle shared the fate of Plimneus, king of Sicyon, and all the offspring he ever had (that is to say, the child and the play) "died as soon as they were born." My uncle was now only at a loss what to do with his wife—that remaining treasure, whose readiness to oblige him had been so miraculously evinced. She saved him the trouble of long cogitation—an exercise of intellect to which he was never too ardently inclined. There was a gentleman of the court, celebrated for his sedateness and solemnity; my aunt was piqued into emulating Orpheus, and, six weeks after her confinement, she put this rock into motion—they eloped. Poor gentleman !—it must have been a severe trial of patience to a man never known before to transgress the very slowest of all possible walks—to have had two events of the most rapid nature happen to him in the same week: scarcely had he recovered the shock of being run away with by my aunt, before, terminating for ever his vagrancies, he was run through by my uncle. The wits made an epigram upon the event, and my uncle, who was as bold as a lion at the point of a sword, was, to speak frankly, terribly disconcerted by the point of a jest. He retired to the country in a fit of disgust and gout. Here his natural goodness soon recovered the effects of the artificial atmosphere to which it had been exposed, and he solaced himself by righteously governing domains worthy of a prince, for the mortifications he had experienced in the dishonorable career of a courtier.

Hitherto I have spoken somewhat slightingly of my uncle, and in his dissipation he deserved it, for he was both too honest and too simple to shine in that galaxy of prostituted genius of which Charles II. was the centre. But in retirement he was no longer the same person; and I do not think that the elements of human nature could have furnished forth a more amiable character than Sir William Devereux presiding at Christmas over the merriment of his great hall.

Good old man ! his very defects were what

we loved best in him—vanity was so mingled with good nature that it became graceful, and we reverenced one the most, while we most smiled at the other.

One peculiarity had he, which the age he had lived in and his domestic history, rendered natural enough, viz., an exceeding distaste to the matrimonial state: early marriages were misery, imprudent marriages idiotism, and marriage, at the best, he was wont to say, with a kindling eye, and a heightened color, marriage at the best—was the devil! Yet it must not be supposed that Sir William Devereux was an ungallant man. On the contrary, never did the *beau sexe* have a humbler or more devoted servant. As nothing in his estimation was less becoming to a wise man than matrimony, so nothing was more ornamental than flirtation.

He had the old man's weakness, garrulity, and he told the wittiest stories in the world, without omitting anything in them but the point. This omission did not arise from the want either of memory or of humor; but solely from a deficiency in the malice natural to all jesters. He could not persuade his lips to repeat a sarcasm hurting even the dead or the ungrateful; and when he came to the drop of gall which should have given zest to the story, the milk of human kindness broke its barrier, despite of himself,—and washed it away. He was a fine wreck, a little prematurely broken by dissipation, but not perhaps the less interesting on that account; tall, and somewhat of the jovial old English girth, with a face where good nature and good living mingled their smiles and glow. He wore the garb of twenty years back, and was curiously particular in the choice of his silk stockings. Between you and me, he was not a little vain of his leg, and a compliment on that score was always sure of a gracious reception.

The solitude of my uncle's household was broken by an invasion of three boys—none of the quietest; and their mother, who, the gentlest and saddest of womankind, seemed to follow them, the emblem of that primeval Silence from which all noise was born. These three boys were my two brothers and myself. My father, who had conceived a strong personal attachment for *Louis Quatorze*, never quitted his service, and the great King repaid him by orders and favors without number; he died of wounds received in battle—a Count and a Marshal, full of renown, and destitute of money. He had married twice: his first wife, who died without issue, was a daughter of the noble house of La Tremouille—his second, our mother, was of a younger branch of the English race of Howard. Brought up in her native country, and influenced by a primitive and retired education, she never loved that gay land which her husband had adopted as his own. Upon his death, she hastened her return to England, and refusing, with somewhat of honorable pride, the magnificent pension which Louis wished to settle upon the widow of his favorite, came to throw herself and her children upon those affections which she knew they were entitled to claim.

My uncle was unaffectedly rejoiced to receive us.—To say nothing of his love for my father, and his pride at the honors the latter had won to their ancient house—the good gentleman was very well pleased with the idea of obtaining four new listeners, out of whom he might select an heir, and he soon grew as fond of us as we were of him. At the time of our new settlement, I had attained the age of twelve; my second brother (we were twins) was born an hour after me; my third was about fifteen months younger. I had never been the favorite of the three. In the first place, my brothers (my youngest especially) were uncommonly handsome, and, at most, I was but tolerably good-looking; in the second place, my mind was considered as much inferior to theirs as my body—I was idle and dull, sullen and haughty—the only wit I ever displayed was in sneering at my friends, and the only spirit, in quarrelling with my twin brother; so said or so thought all who saw us in our childhood; and it follows, therefore, that I was either very unamiable or very much misunderstood.

But, to the astonishment of myself and my relations, my fate was now to be reversed, and I was no sooner settled at Devereux Court, than I became evidently the object of Sir William's pre-eminent attachment. The fact was, that I really liked both the knight and his stories better than my brothers did; and the very first time I had seen my uncle, I had commented on the beauty of his stocking, and envied the constitution of his leg; from such trifles spring affection! In truth, our attachment to each other so increased that we grew to be constantly together; and while my childish

anticipations of the world made me love to listen to stories of courts and courtiers, my uncle returned the compliment, by declaring of my wit, as the angler declared of the River Lea, that one would find enough in it, if one would but angle sufficiently long.

Nor was this all; my uncle and myself were exceedingly like the waters of Alpheus and Arethusa—nothing was thrown into the one without being seen very shortly afterwards floating upon the other. Every witticism or legend Sir William imparted to me (and some, to say truth, were a little tinged with the licentiousness of the times he had lived in), I took the first opportunity of retailing, whatever might be the audience; and few boys, at the age of thirteen, can boast of having so often as myself excited the laughter of the men and the blushes of the women. This circumstance, while it aggravated my own vanity, delighted my uncle's; and as I was always getting into scrapes on his account, so he was perpetually bound, by duty, to defend me from the charges of which he was the cause. No man defends another long without loving him the better for it; and perhaps Sir William Devereux and his eldest nephew were the only allies in the world who had no jealousy of each other.

CHAPTER II.

A Family Consultation.—A Priest, and an Æra in Life.

"You are ruining the children, my dear Sir William," said my gentle mother, one day, when I had been particularly witty, "and the Abbé Montreuil declares it absolutely necessary that they should go to school."

"To school!" said my uncle, who was caressing his right leg, as it lay over his left knee—"to school, Madam! you are joking. What for, pray?"

"Instruction, my dear Sir William," replied my mother.

"Ah, ah; I forgot that; true, true!" said my uncle, despondingly, and there was a pause. My mother counted her rosary; my uncle sank into a reverie; my twin brother pinched my leg under the table, to which I replied by a silent kick: and my youngest fixed his large, dark, speaking eyes upon a picture of the Holy Family, which hung opposite to him.

My uncle broke silence; he did it with a start.

"Od's fish, Madam,"—(my uncle dressed his oaths, like himself, a little after the example of Charles II.)—"od's fish, Madam, I have thought of a better plan than that; they shall have instruction without going to school for it."

"And, how, Sir William?"

"I will instruct them myself, Madam," and Sir William slapped the calf of the leg he was caressing.

My mother smiled.

"Ay, Madam, you may smile; but I and my Lord Dorset were the best scholars of the age; you shall read my play."

"Do, mother," said I, "read the play. Shall I tell her some of the jests in it, uncle?"

My mother shook her head in anticipative horror, and raised her finger reprovingly. My uncle said nothing, but winked at me; I understood the signal, and was about to begin, when the door opened, and the Abbé Montreuil entered. My uncle released his right leg, and my jest was cut off. Nobody ever inspired a more dim, religious awe than the Abbé Montreuil. The priest entered with a smile. My mother hailed the entrance of an ally.

"Father," said she, rising, "I have just represented to my good brother the necessity of sending my sons to school; he has proposed an alternative which I will leave you to discuss with him."

"And what is it?" said Montreuil, sliding into a chair, and patting Gerald's head with a benignant air.

"To educate them himself," answered my mother, with a sort of satirical gravity. My uncle moved uneasily in his seat, as if, for the first time, he saw something ridiculous in the proposal.

The smile, immediately fading from the thin lips of the priest, gave way to an expression of respectful approbation. "An admirable plan," said he, slowly, "but liable to some little exceptions, which Sir William will allow me to point out."

My mother called to us, and we left the room with her. The next time we saw my uncle, the priest's reasonings had prevailed. The following week we all three went to school. My father had been a Catholic, my mother was of the same creed, and consequently we were brought up in that unpopular faith.

But my uncle, whose religion had been sadly undermined at court, was a terrible caviller at the holy mysteries of Catholicism; and while his friends termed him a Protestant, his enemies hinted, falsely enough, that he was a sceptic. When Montreuil first followed us to Devereux Court, many and bitter were the little jests my worthy uncle had provided for his reception; and he would shake his head with a notable archness whenever he heard our reverential description of the expected guest. But, somehow or other, no sooner had he seen the priest, than all his purposed railleries deserted him. Not a single witticism came to his assistance, and the calm, smooth face of the ecclesiastic seemed to operate upon the fierce resolves of the facetious knight in the same manner as the human eye is supposed to awe into impotence the malignant intentions of the ignobler animals. Yet nothing could be blander than the demeanor of the Abbé Montreuil—nothing more worldly, in their urbanity, than his manner and address. His garb was as little clerical as possible, his conversation rather familiar than formal, and he invariably listened to every syllable the good knight uttered, with a countenance and mien of the most attentive respect.

What then was the charm by which this singular man never failed to obtain an ascendancy in some measure allied with fear, over all in whose company he was thrown? That was a secret my uncle never could solve, and which, only in later life, I myself was able to discover. It was partly by the magic of an extraordinary and powerful mind, partly by an expression of manner, if I may use such a phrase, that seemed to sneer most, when most it affected to respect; and partly by an air like that of a man never exactly at his ease; not that he was shy, or ungraceful, or even taciturn—no! it was an indescribable embarrassment, resembling that of one playing a part, familiar to him, indeed, but somewhat distasteful. This embarrassment, however, was sufficient to be contagious, and to confuse that dignity in others which, strangely enough, never forsook himself.

He was of low origin, but his address and appearance did not betray his birth. Pride suited his mien better than familiarity—and his countenance, rigid, thoughtful, and cold, even through smiles, in expression was strikingly commanding. In person he was slightly above the middle standard; and had not the texture of his frame been remarkably hard, wiry, and muscular, the total absence of all superfluous flesh would have given the lean gauntness of his figure an appearance of almost spectral emaciation. In reality, his age did not exceed twenty-eight years; but his high, broad forehead was already so marked with line and furrow, his air was so staid and quiet, his figure so destitute of the roundness and elasticity of youth, that his appearance always impressed the beholder with the involuntary idea of a man considerably more advanced in life. Abstemious to habitual penance, and regular to mechanical exactness in his frequent and severe devotions, he was as little inwardly addicted to the pleasures and pursuits of youth, as he was externally possessed of its freshness and its bloom.

Nor was gravity with him that unmeaning veil to imbecility, which Rochefoucauld has so happily called "the mystery of the body." The variety and depth of his learning fully sustained the respect which his demeanor insensibly created. To say nothing of his lore in the dead tongues, he possessed a knowledge of the principal European languages besides his own, viz., English, Italian, German, and Spanish, not less accurate and little less fluent than that of a native; and he had not only gained the key to these various coffers of intellectual wealth, but he had also possessed himself of their treasures. He had been educated at St. Omer; and, young as he was, he had already acquired no inconsiderable reputation among his brethren of that illustrious and celebrated Order of Jesus which has produced some of the worst and some of the best men that the Christian world has ever known—which has, in its successful zeal for knowledge, and the circulation of mental light, bequeathed a vast debt of gratitude to posterity; but which, unhappily encouraging certain scholastic doctrines, that by a mind at once subtle and vicious can be easily perverted into the sanction of the most dangerous and systematized immorality, has already drawn upon its professors an almost universal odium.

So highly established was the good name of Montreuil that when, three years prior to the time of which I now speak, he had been elected to the office he held in our family, it was scarcely deemed a less fortunate occurrence for us, to gain so learned and so pious a preceptor,

than it was for him to acquire a situation of such trust and confidence in the household of a Marshal of France, and the especial favorite of Louis XIV.

It was pleasant enough to mark the gradual ascendancy he gained over my uncle; and the timorous dislike which the good knight entertained for him, yet struggled to conceal. Perhaps that was the only time in his life in which Sir William Devereux was a hypocrite.

Enough of the priest at present—I return to his charge. To school we went—our parting with our uncle was quite pathetic—mine in especial. "Harkye, Sir Count," whispered he (I bore my father's title), "harkye, don't mind what the old priest tells you; your real man of wit never wants the musty lessons of schools in order to make a figure in the world. Don't cramp your genius, my boy; read over my play, and honest George Etherege's 'Man of Mode;' they'll keep your spirits alive, after dozing over those old pages which Homer (good soul !) dozed over before. God bless you, my child—write to me—no one, not even your mother, shall see your letters—and—and be sure, my fine fellow, that you don't fag too hard. The glass of life is the best book—and one's natural wit the only diamond that can write legibly on it."

Such were my uncle's parting admonitions; it must be confessed that, coupled with the dramatic gifts alluded to, they were likely to be of infinite service to the *débutant* for academical honors. In fact, Sir William Devereux was deeply impregnated with the notion of his time, that ability and inspiration were the same thing, and that, unless you were thoroughly idle, you could not be thoroughly a genius. I verily believe that he thought wisdom got its gems, as Abu Zeid al Hassan * declares some Chinese philosophers thought oysters got their pearls—viz.—*by gaping !*

* In his Commentary on the account of China by two Travellers.

CHAPTER III.

A Change in Conduct and in Character—our evil Passions will sometimes produce good Effects: and, on the contrary, an Alteration for the better in Manners will, not unfrequently, have amongst its Causes a little Corruption of Mind: for the Feelings are so blended, that in suppressing those disagreeable to others, we often suppress those which are amiable in themselves.

My twin brother, Gerald, was a tall, strong, handsome boy, blessed with a great love for the orthodox academical studies, and extraordinary quickness of ability. Nevertheless, he was indolent by nature, in things which were contrary to his taste—fond of pleasure—and, amidst all his personal courage, ran a certain vein of irresolution, which rendered it easy for a cool and determined mind to awe or to persuade him. I cannot help thinking, too, that, clever as he was, there was something commonplace in the cleverness; and that his talent was of that mechanical, yet quick, nature, which makes wonderful boys, but *médiocre* men. In any other family he would have been considered the beauty—in ours he was thought the genius.

My youngest brother, Aubrey, was of a very different disposition of mind and frame of body; thoughtful, gentle, susceptible, acute; with an uncertain bravery, like a woman's, and a taste for reading, that varied with the caprice of every hour. He was the beauty of the three, and my mother's favorite. Never, indeed, have I seen the countenance of man so perfect, so glowingly, yet delicately handsome, as that of Aubrey Devereux. Locks, soft, glossy, and twining into ringlets, fell in dark profusion over a brow whiter than marble; his eyes were black and tender, as a Georgian girl's; his lips, his teeth, the contour of his face, were all cast in the same feminine and faultless mould; his hands would have shamed those of Madame de la Tisseur, whose lover offered six thousand marks to any European who could wear her glove; and his figure would have made Titania give up her Henchman, and the King of the Fairies be anything but pleased with the exchange.

Such were my two brothers; or, rather (so far as the internal qualities are concerned), such they seemed to me; for it is a singular fact that we never judge of our near kindred so well as we judge of others; and I appeal to any one, whether, of all people by whom he has

been mistaken, he has not been most often mistaken by those with whom he was brought up!

I had always loved Aubrey, but they had not suffered him to love *me;* and we had been so little together that we had in common none of those childish remembrances which serve, more powerfully than all else in later life, to cement and soften affection. In fact, I was the scapegoat of the family. What I must have been in early childhood, I cannot tell—but, before I was ten years old, I was the object of all the despondency and evil forebodings of my relations. My father said I laughed at *la gloire et le grand monarque*, the very first time he attempted to explain to me the value of the one and the greatness of the other. The countess said I had neither my father's eye, nor her own smile—that I was slow at my letters, and quick with my tongue; and, throughout the whole house, nothing was so favorite a topic as the extent of my rudeness, and the venom of my repartee. Montreuil, on his entrance into our family, not only fell in with, but favored and fostered, the reigning humor against me; whether from that *divide et impera* system, which was so grateful to his temper, or from the mere love of meddling and intrigue, which in him, as in Alberoni, attached itself equally to petty as to large circles, was not then clearly apparent; it was only certain that he fomented the dissentions and widened the breach between my brothers and myself.—Alas! after all, I believe my sole crime was my candor. I had a spirit of frankness, which no fear could tame, and my vengeance for any infantine punishment was in speaking veraciously of my punishers. Never tell me of the pang of falsehood to the slandered: nothing is so agonizing to the fine skin of vanity as the application of a rough truth!

As I grew older, I saw my power, and indulged it; and, being scolded for sarcasm, I was flattered into believing I had wit; so I punned and jested, lampooned and satirized, till I was as much a torment to others as I was tormented myself. The secret of all this was that I was unhappy. Nobody loved me—I felt it to my heart of hearts. I was conscious of injustice, and the sense of it made me bitter. Our feelings, especially in youth, resemble that leaf which, in some old traveller, is described as expanding itself to warmth, but when chilled, not only shrinking and closing, but presenting to the spectator thorns, which had lain concealed upon the opposite side of it before.

With my brother Gerald, I had a deadly and irreconcileable feud. He was much stouter, taller, and stronger than myself; and, far from conceding to me that respect which I imagined my priority of birth entitled me to claim, he took every opportunity to deride my pretensions and to vindicate the cause of the superior strength and vigor which constituted his own. It would have done your heart good to have seen us cuff one another, we did it with such zeal. There is nothing in human passion like a good brotherly hatred! my mother said, with the most feeling earnestness, that she used to feel us fighting even before our birth: we certainly lost no time directly after it. Both my parents were secretly vexed that I had come into the world an hour sooner than my brother; and Gerald himself looked upon it as a sort of juggle—a kind of jockeyship by which he had lost the prerogative of birth-right. This very early rankled in his heart, and he was so much a greater favorite than myself that, instead of rooting out so unfortunate a feeling on his part, my good parents made no scruple of openly lamenting my seniority. I believe the real cause of our being taken from the domestic instructions of the Abbé (who was an admirable teacher) and sent to school, was solely to prevent my uncle deciding everything in my favor. Montreuil, however, accompanied us to our academy, and remained with us during the three years in which we were perfecting ourselves in the blessings of education.

At the end of the second year, a prize was instituted for the best proficient at a very severe examination; two months before it took place we went home for a few days. After dinner my uncle asked me to walk with him in the park. I did so: we strolled along to the margin of a rivulet, which ornamented the grounds. There my uncle, for the first time, broke silence.

"Morton," said he, looking down at his left leg, "Morton—let me see—thou art now of a reasonable age—fourteen at the least."

"Fifteen, if it please you, sir," said I, elevating my stature as much as I was able.

"Humph! my boy; and a pretty time of life it is, too. Your brother Gerald is taller than you by two inches."

"But I can beat him, for all that, uncle," said I, coloring, and clenching my fist.

My uncle pulled down his right ruffle. "'Gad so, Morton, you're a brave fellow," said he; "but I wish you were less of a hero and more of a scholar. I wish you could beat him in Greek, as well as in boxing. I will tell you what Old Rowley said," and my uncle occupied the next quarter of an hour with a story. The story opened the good old gentleman's heart—my laughter opened it still more. "Hark ye, sirrah!" said he, pausing abruptly, and grasping my hand with a vigorous effort of love and muscle, "hark ye, sirrah—I love you—'Sdeath, I do. I love you better than both your brothers, and that crab of a priest into the bargain; but I am grieved to the heart to hear what I do of you. They tell me you are the idlest boy in the school—that you are always beating your brother Gerald, and making a scurrilous jest of your mother or myself."

"Who says so? who dares say so?" said I, with an emphasis that would have startled a less hearty man than Sir William Devereux. "They lie, uncle, by my soul they do. Idle I am—quarelsome with my brother I confess myself; but jesting at you or my mother—never—never. No, no; *you*, too, who have been so kind to me—the only one who ever was! No, no; do not think I could be such a wretch," and as I said this the tears gushed from my eyes.

My good uncle was exceedingly affected. "Look ye, child," said he, I do not believe them. 'Sdeath, not a word—I would repeat to you a good jest now of Sedley's, 'Gad, I would, but I am really too much moved just at present. I tell you what, my boy, I tell you what you shall do: there is a trial coming on at school—eh?—well, the Abbé tells me, Gerald is certain of being first, and you of being last. Now, Morton, you shall beat your brother, and shame the Jesuit. There—my mind's spoken—dry your tears, my boy, and I'll tell you the jest Sedley made: it was in the Mulberry Garden one day——" And the knight told his story.

I dried my tears—pressed my uncle's hand—escaped from him as soon as I was able—hastened to my room, and surrendered myself to reflection.

When my uncle so good-naturally proposed that I should conquer Gerald at the examination, nothing appeared to him more easy; he was pleased to think I had more talent than my brother, and talent, according to his creed, was the only master-key to unlock every science. A problem in Euclid, or a phrase in Pindar, a secret in astronomy, or a knotty passage in the fathers, were all riddles, with the solution of which, application had nothing to do. One's mother-wit was a precious sort of necromancy, which could pierce every mystery at first sight; and all the gifts of knowledge, in his opinion, like reading and writing in that of the sage Dogberry, "came by nature." Alas! I was not under the same pleasurable delusion; I rather exaggerated than diminished the difficulty of my task, and thought, at the first glance, that nothing short of a miracle would enable me to excel my brother.—Gerald, a boy of natural talent, and as I said before, of great assiduity in the orthodox studies—especially favored too by the instruction of Montreuil—had long been esteemed the first scholar of our little world; and though I knew that with some branches of learning I was more conversant than himself, yet, as my emulation had been hitherto solely directed to bodily contention, I had never thought of contesting with him a reputation for which I cared little, and on a point in which I had been early taught that I could never hope to enter into any advantageous comparison with the "genius" of the Devereuxs.

A new spirit now passed into me—I examined myself with a jealous and impartial scrutiny—I weighed my acquisitions against those of my brother—I called forth, from their secret recesses, the unexercised and almost unknown stores I had from time to time laid up in my mental armory to moulder and to rust. I surveyed them with a feeling that they might yet be polished into use: and, excited alike by the stimulus of affection on one side, and hatred on the other, my mind worked itself from despondency into doubt, and from doubt into the sanguineness of hope. I told none of my design,—I exacted from my uncle a promise not to betray it—I shut myself in my room—I gave out that I was ill—I saw no one, not even the Abbé—I rejected his instructions, for I looked upon him as an enemy; and, for the two months, before my trial, I spent night and day in an unrelaxing application, of which, till then, I had not imagined myself capable.

Though inattentive to the school exercises, I

had never been wholly idle. I was a lover of abstruser researches than the hackneyed subjects of the school, and we had really received such extensive and judicious instructions from the Abbé during our early years that it would have been scarcely possible for any of us to have fallen into a thorough distaste for intellectual pursuits. In the examination, I foresaw that much which I had previously acquired might be profitably displayed—much secret and recondite knowledge of the customs and manners of the ancients, as well as their literature, which curiosity had led me to obtain, and which I knew had never entered into the heads of those who, contented with their reputation in the customary academical routine, had rarely dreamed of wandering into less beaten paths of learning. Fortunately too for me, Gerald was so certain of success that latterly he omitted all precaution to obtain it; and as none of our school-fellows had the vanity to think of contesting with him, even the Abbé seemed to imagine him justified in his supineness.

The day arrived. Sir William, my mother, the whole aristocracy of the neighborhood, were present at the trial. The Abbé came to my room a few hours before it commenced; he found the door locked.

"Ungracious boy," said he, "admit me—I come at the earnest request of your brother, Aubrey, to give you some hints preparatory to the examination."

"He has indeed come at my wish," said the soft and silver voice of Aubrey, in a supplicating tone: "do admit him, dear Morton, for my sake!"

"Go," said I, bitterly from within, "go—ye are both my foes and slanderers—you come to insult my disgrace beforehand; but, perhaps you will yet be disappointed."

"You will not open the door?" said the priest.

"I will not—begone."

"He will indeed disgrace his family," said Montreuil, moving away.

"He will disgrace himself," said Aubrey, dejectedly.

I laughed scornfully. If ever the consciousness of strength is pleasant, it is when we are thought most weak.

The greater part of our examination consisted in the answering of certain questions in writing, given to us in the three days immediately previous to the grand and final one; for this last day was reserved the paper of composition (as it was termed) in verse and prose, and the personal examination in a few showy, but generally understood, subjects. When Gerald gave in his paper, and answered the verbal questions, a buzz of admiration and anxiety went round the room. His person was so handsome, his address so graceful, his voice so assured and clear, that a strong and universal sympathy was excited in his favor. The head-master publicly complimented him. He regretted only the deficiency of his pupil in certain minor but important matters.

I came next, for I stood next to Gerald in our class. As I walked up the hall, I raised my eyes to the gallery in which my uncle and his party sat. I saw that my mother was listening to the Abbé, whose eye, severe, cold, and contemptuous, was bent upon me. But my uncle leant over the railing of the gallery, with his plumed hat in his hand, which, when he caught my look, he waved gently—as if in token of encouragement, and with an air so kind and cheering, that I felt my step grow prouder as I approached the conclave of the masters.

"Morton Devereux," said the president of the school in a calm, loud, austere voice, that filled the whole hall, "we have looked over your papers on the three previous days, and they have given us no less surprise than pleasure. Take heed and time how you answer us now."

At this speech a loud murmur was heard in my uncle's party, which gradually spread round the hall. I again looked up—my mother's face was averted: that of the Abbé was impenetrable, but I saw my uncle wiping his eyes, and felt a strange emotion creeping into my own. I turned hastily away, and presented my paper—the head-master received it, and, putting it aside, proceeded to the verbal examination.

Conscious of the parts in which Gerald was likely to fail, I had paid special attention to the minutiæ of scholarship, and my forethought stood me in good stead at the present moment. My trial ceased—my last paper was read. I bowed, and retired to the other end of the hall. I was not so popular as Gerald—a crowd was assembled round him, but I stood alone. As I leant against a column, with folded arms, and

a countenance which I felt betrayed little of my internal emotions, my eye caught Gerald's. He was very pale, and I could see that his hand trembled. Despite of our enmity, I felt for him. The worst passions are softened by triumph, and I foresaw that mine was at hand.

The whole examination was over. Every boy had passed it. The masters retired for a moment—they re-appeared and re-seated themselves. The first sound I heard was that of my own name. I was the victor of the day—I was more—I was one hundred marks before my brother. My head swam round—my breath forsook me. Since then I have been placed in many trials of life, and had many triumphs; but never was I so overcome as at that moment. I left the hall—I scarcely listened to the applauses with which it rang. I hurried to my own chamber, and threw myself on the bed in a delirium of intoxicated feeling, which had in it more of rapture than anything but the gratification of first-love, or first vanity can bestow.

Ah! it would be worth stimulating our pessions if it were only for the pleasure of remembering their effect; and all violent excitement should be indulged less for present joy than for future retrospection.

My uncle's step was the first thing which intruded on my solitude.

"Od's fish, my boy," said he, crying like a child, "this is fine work—'Gad so it is. I almost wish I were a boy myself to have a match with you—faith I do—see what it is to learn a little of life. If you had never read my play, do you think you would have done half so well?—no, my boy, I sharpened your wits for you. Honest George Etherege and I—we were the making of you; and when you come to be a great man, and are asked what made you so, you shall say—'My uncle's play'—'Gad, you shall. Faith, boy—never smile!—Od's fish—I'll tell you a story as *à propos* to the present occasion as if it had been made on purpose. Rochester, and I, and Sedley, were walking one day,—and *entre nous*—awaiting certain appointments—hem!—for my part I was a little melancholy or so, thinking of my catastrophe—that is, of my play's catastrophe; and so, said Sedley, winking at Rochester, 'our friend is sorrowful.' 'Truly,' said I, seeing they were about to banter me—for you know they were arch fellows—'truly, little Sid' (we called Sedley Sid), 'you are greatly mistaken;'—you see, Morton, I was thus sharp upon him, because, when you go to Court, you will discover that it does not do to take without giving. And then Rochester said, looking roughly towards me, the wittiest thing against Sedley that ever I heard—it was the most celebrated *bon mot* at Court for three weeks—he said—No, boy, od's fish, it was so stinging I can't tell it thee; faith, I can't. Poor Sid; he was a good fellow, though malicious—and he's dead now.—I'm sorry I said a word about it. Nay, never look so disappointed, boy. You have all the cream of the story as it is. And now put on your hat, and come with me. I've got leave for you to take a walk with your old uncle."

That night, as I was undressing, I heard a gentle rap at the door, and Aubrey entered. He approached me timidly, and then, throwing his arms round my neck, kissed me in silence. I had not for years experienced such tenderness from him; and I sat now mute and surprised. At last I said, with the sneer which I must confess I usually assumed towards those persons whom I imagined I had a right to think ill of:

"Pardon me, my gentle brother, there is something portentous in this sudden change. Look well round the room, and tell me at your earliest leisure what treasure it is that you are desirous should pass from my possession into your own."

"Your love, Morton," said Aubrey, drawing back, but apparently in pride, not anger; "your love—I ask nothing more."

"Of a surety, kind Aubrey," said I, "the favor seems somewhat slight to have caused your modesty such delay in requesting it. I think you have been now some years nerving your mind to the exertion."

"Listen to me, Morton," said Aubrey, suppressing his emotion; "you have always been my favorite brother. From our first childhood my heart yearned to you. Do you remember the time when an enraged bull pursued me, and you, then only ten years old, placed yourself before it and defended me at the risk of your own life? Do you think I could ever forget that—child as I was?—never, Morton, never!"

Before I could answer, the door was thrown open, and the Abbé entered. "Children," said he, and the single light of the room shone full upon his unmoved, rigid, commanding features

—"children, be as heaven intended you—friends and brothers. Morton, I have wronged you, I own it—here is my hand; Aubrey, let all but early love, and the present promise of excellence which your brother displays, be forgotten."

With these words, the priest joined our hands. I looked on my brother, and my heart melted. I flung myself into his arms and wept.

"This is well," said Montreuil, surveying us with a kind of grim complacency, and, taking my brother's arm, he blest us both, and led Aubrey away.

That day was a new era in my boyish life. I grew henceforth both better and worse. Application and I, having once shaken hands, became very good acquaintance. I had hitherto valued myself upon supplying the frailties of a delicate frame, by an uncommon agility in all bodily exercises. I now strove rather to improve the deficiencies of my mind, and became orderly, industrious, and devoted to study. So far so well—but as I grew wiser, I grew also more wary. Candor no longer seemed to me the finest of virtues. I thought before I spoke; and second thought sometimes quite changed the nature of the intended speech; in short, gentlemen of the next century, to tell you the exact truth, the little Count Devereux became somewhat of a hypocrite!

CHAPTER IV.

A Contest of Art, and a League of Friendship—Two Characters in mutual Ignorance of each other, and the reader no wiser than either of them.

The Abbé was now particularly courteous to me. He made Gerald and myself breakfast with him, and told us nothing was so amiable as friendship among brothers. We agreed to the sentiment, and, like all philosophers, did not agree a bit the better for acknowledging the same first principles. Perhaps, notwithstanding his fine speeches, the Abbé was the real cause of our continued want of cordiality. However, we did not fight any more—we avoided each other, and at last became as civil and as distant as those mathematical lines, which appear to be taking all possible pains to approach one another, and never get a jot the nearer for it. Oh! your civility is the prettiest invention possible for dislike! Aubrey and I were inseparable, and we both gained by the intercourse. I grew more gentle, and he more masculine; and, for my part, the kindness of his temper so softened the satire of mine that I learned at last to smile full as often as to sneer.

The Abbé had obtained a wonderful hold over Aubrey; he had made the poor boy think so much of the next world, that he had lost all relish for this. He lived in a perpetual fear of offence—he was like a chemist of conscience, and weighed minutiæ by scruples. To play, to ride, to run, to laugh at a jest, or to banquet on a melon, were all sins to be atoned for; and I have found (as a penance for eating twenty-three cherries instead of eighteen) the penitent of fourteen standing, barefooted, in the coldest nights of winter, upon the hearth-stones, almost utterly naked, and shivering like a leaf, beneath the mingled effect of frost and devotion. At first I attempted to wrestle with this exceeding holiness, but finding my admonitions received with great distaste and some horror, I suffered my brother to be happy in his own way. I only looked with a very evil and jealous eye upon the good Abbé, and examined, while I encouraged them, the motives of his advances to myself. What doubled my suspicions of the purity of the priest was my perceiving that he appeared to hold out different inducements for trusting him, to each of us, according to his notions of our respective characters. My brother Gerald he alternately awed and persuaded, by the sole effect of superior intellect. With Aubrey he used the mechanism of superstition. To me, he, on the one hand, never spoke of religion, nor, on the other, ever used threats or persuasion, to induce me to follow any plan suggested to my adoption; everything seemed to be left to my reason and my ambition. He would converse with me for hours upon the world and its affairs, speak of courts and kings, in an easy and unpedantic strain; point out the advantage of intellect in acquiring power and controlling one's species; and, whenever I was disposed to be sarcastic upon the human nature I had read of, he supported my sarcasm by illustrations of the human nature he had seen. We were both, I think (for myself I can answer), endeavoring to pierce the real nature of the other; and per-

haps the talent of diplomacy for which, years afterwards, I obtained some applause, was first learnt in my skirmishing warfare with the Abbé Montreuil.

At last, the evening before we quitted school for good arrived. Aubrey had just left me for solitary prayers, and I was sitting alone by my fire, when Montreuil entered gently. He sat himself down by me, and, after giving me the salutation of the evening, sunk into a silence which I was the first to break.

"Pray, Abbé," said I, "have one's years anything to do with one's age?"

The priest was accustomed to the peculiar tone of my sagacious remarks, and answered drily—

"Mankind in general imagine that they have."

"Faith then," said I, "mankind know very little about the matter. To-day I am at school, and a boy to-morrow I leave school—if I hasten to town I am presented at court—and lo! I am a man; and this change within half-a-dozen changes of the sun!—therefore, most reverend father, I humbly opine that age is measured by events—not years."

"And are you not happy at the idea of passing the age of thraldom, and seeing arrayed before you the numberless and dazzling pomps and pleasures of the great world?" said Montreuil, abruptly, fixing his dark and keen eye upon me.

"I have not yet fully made up my mind, whether to be happy or not," said I carelessly.

"It is a strange answer," said the priest; "but" (after a pause) "you are a strange youth—a character that resembles a riddle, is at your age uncommon, and, pardon me, unamiable. Age, naturally repulsive, requires a mask; and in every wrinkle you may behold the ambush of a scheme; but the heart of youth should be open as its countenance! However, I will not weary you with homilies—let us change the topic. Tell me, Morton, do you repent having turned your attention of late to those graver and more systematic studies which can alone hereafter obtain you distinction?"

"No, father," said I, with a courtly bow, "for the change has gained me your good opinion."

A smile, of peculiar and undefinable expression, crossed the thin lips of the priest; he rose, walked to the door, and saw that it was carefully closed. I expected some important communication, but in vain; pacing the small room to and fro, as if in a musing mood, the Abbe remained silent, till, pausing opposite some fencing foils, which, among various matters (books, papers, quoits, etc.), were thrown idly in one corner of the room, he said—

"They tell me that you are the best fencer in the school—is it so?"

"I hope not, for fencing is an accomplishment in which Gerald is very nearly my equal," I replied.

"You run, ride, leap, too, better than any one else, according to the votes of your comrades?"

"It is a noble reputation," said I, "in which I believe I am only excelled by our huntsman's eldest son."

"You are a strange youth," repeated the priest; "no pursuit seems to give you pleasure, and no success to gratify your vanity. Can you not think of *any* triumph which would elate you?"

I was silent.

"Yes," cried Montreuil, approaching me—"yes," cried he, "I read your heart, and I respect it;—these are petty competitions and worthless honors. You require a nobler goal, and a more glorious reward. He who feels in his soul that Fate has reserved for him a great and exalted part in this world's drama, may reasonably look with indifference on these paltry rehearsals of common characters."

I raised my eye, and as it met that of the priest, I was irresistibly struck with the proud and luminous expression which Montreuil's look had assumed. Perhaps something kindred to its nature was perceptible in my own; for, after surveying me with an air of more approbation than he had ever honored me with before, he grasped my arm firmly, and said, "Morton, you know me not—for many years I have not known you—that time is past. No sooner did your talents develop themselves than I was the first to do homage to their power—let us henceforth be more to each other than we have been—let us not be pupil and teacher—let us be friends. Do not think that I invite you to an unequal exchange of good offices—you may be the heir to wealth, and a distinguished name—I may seem to you but an unknown and undignified priest—but the authority of the Al-

mighty can raise up, from the sheep-fold and the cotter's shed, a power, which, as the organ of His own, can trample upon sceptres, and dictate to the supremacy of kings. And *I*—*I*,—" the priest abruptly paused, checked the warmth of his manner, as if he thought it about to encroach on indiscretion, and, sinking into a calmer tone, continued, "Yes, I, Morton, insignificant as I appear to you, can, in *every* path through this intricate labyrinth of life, be more useful to your desires than you can ever be to mine. I offer to you in my friendship, a fervor of zeal and energy of power, which in none of your equals, in age and station, you can hope to find. Do you accept my offer?"

"Can you doubt," said I, with eagerness, "that I would avail myself of the services of any man, however displeasing to me, and worthless in himself? How, then, can I avoid embracing the friendship of one so extraordinary in knowledge and intellect as yourself? I do embrace it, and with rapture."

The priest pressed my hand. "But," continued he, fixing his eyes upon mine, "all alliances have their conditions—I require implicit confidence; and, for some years, till time gives you experience, regard for your interests induces me also to require obedience. Name any wish you may form for worldly advancement, opulence, honor, the smile of kings, the gifts of states, and—I—I will pledge myself to carry that wish into effect. Never had eastern prince so faithful a servant among the Dives and Genii as Morton Devereux shall find in me; but question me not of the sources of my power—be satisfied when their channel wafts you the success you covet. And, more, when I in my turn (and this shall be but rarely) request a favor of you, ask me not for what end, nor hesitate to adopt the means I shall propose. You seem startled;—are you content at this understanding between us, or will you retract the bond?"

"My father," said I, "there is enough to startle me in your proposal; it greatly resembles that made by the Old Man of the Mountains to his vassals, and it would not exactly suit my inclinations to be called upon some morning to act the part of a private executioner."

The priest smiled. "My young friend," said he, "those days have passed; neither religion nor friendship requires of her votaries sacrifices of blood. But make yourself easy; whenever I ask of you what offends your conscience, even in a punctilio, refuse my request. With this exception, what say you?"

"That I think I will agree to the bond; but, father, I am an irresolute person—I must have time to consider."

"Be it so. To-morrow, having surrendered my charge to your uncle, I depart for France."

"For France!" said I; "and how?—Surely the war will prevent your passage."

The priest smiled. Nothing ever displeased me more than that priest's smile. "The ecclesiastics," said he, "are the ambassadors of heaven, and have nothing to do with the wars of earth. I shall find no difficulty in crossing the Channel. I shall not return for several months, perhaps not till the expiration of a year: I leave you, till then, to decide upon the terms I have proposed to you. Meanwhile, gratify my vanity, by employing my power; name some commission in France which you wish me to execute."

"I can think of none—yet, stay,—" and I felt some curiosity to try the power of which he boasted—"I have read that kings are blest with a most accommodating memory, and perfectly forget their favorites, when they can be no longer useful. You will see, perhaps, if my father's name has become a gothic and unknown sound at the court of the Great King. I confess myself curious to learn this, though I can have no personal interest in it."

"Enough, the commission shall be done. And now, my child, Heaven bless you! and send you many such friends as the humble priest, who, whatever be his failings, has, at least, the merit of wishing to serve those whom he loves."

So saying, the priest closed the door. Sinking into a reverie, as his footsteps died upon my ear, I muttered to myself:—"Well, well, my sage ecclesiastic, the game is not over yet; let us see if, at sixteen, we cannot shuffle cards, and play tricks with the gemester of thirty. Yet, he may be in earnest, and faith I believe he is; but I must look well before I leap, or consign my actions into such spiritual keeping. However, if the worst come to the worst, if I do make this compact, and am deceived—if, above all, I am ever seduced, or led blindfold into one of those snares which priestcraft sometimes lays to the cost of honor—why I shall have a sword, which I shall never be at a

loss to use, and it can find its way through a priest's gown as well as a soldier's corslet."

Confess that a youth, who could think so promptly of his sword, was well fitted to wear one!

CHAPTER V.

Rural Hospitality—an extraordinary Guest. A fine Gentleman is not necessarily a Fool.

We were all three (my brothers and myself) precocious geniuses. Our early instructions, under a man, like the Abbé, at once learned and worldly, and the Society into which we had been initiated from our childhood, made us premature adepts in the manners of the world; and I, in especial, flattered myself that a quick habit of observation rendered me no despicable profiter by my experience. Our academy, too, had been more like a college than a school; and we had enjoyed a license that seemed, to the superficial, more likely to benefit our manners than to strengthen our morals. I do not think, however, that the latter suffered by our freedom from restraint. On the contrary, we the earlier learnt that vice, but for the piquancy of its unlawfulness, would never be so captivating a goddess; and our errors and crimes, in after life, had certainly not their origin in our wanderings out of academical bounds.

It is right that I should mention our prematurity of intellect, because, otherwise, much of my language and reflections, as detailed in the first book of this history, might seem ill-suited to the tender age at which they occurred. However, they approach, as nearly as possible, to my state of mind at that period; and I have, indeed, often mortified my vanity, in later life, by thinking how little the march of time has ripened my abilities, and how petty would have been the intellectual acquisitions of manhood—if they had not brought me something like content!

My uncle had always, during his retirement, seen as many people as he could assemble out of the "mob of Gentlemen who *live at* ease." But, on our quitting school, and becoming men, he resolved to set no bounds to his hospitality. His doors were literally thrown open; and as he was by far the greatest person in the district—to say nothing of his wines, and his French cook—many of the good people of London did not think it too great an honor to confer upon the wealthy representative of the Devereuxs the distinction of their company and compliments. Heavens! what notable samples of court breeding and furbelows, did the crane-neck coaches, which made our own family vehicle look like a gilt tortoise, pour forth by couples and leashes into the great hall—while my gallant uncle, in a new periwig, and a pair of silver-clocked stockings (a present from a *ci-devant* fine lady), stood at the far end of the picture gallery, to receive his visitors, with all the graces of the last age.

My mother, who had preserved her beauty wonderfully, sat in a chair of green velvet, and astonished the courtiers by the fashion of a dress only just imported. The worthy Countess (she had dropped in England the loftier distinction of *Madame la Maréchale*) was however quite innocent of any intentional affectation of the mode: for the new stomacher, so admired in London, had been the last alteration in female garniture at Paris, a month before my father died. Is not this "Fashion" a noble divinity to possess such zealous adherents!—a pitiful, lackey-like creature, which struts through one country with the cast-off finery of another!

As for Aubrey and Gerald, they produced quite an effect—and I should most certainly have been thrown irrevocably into the back ground, had I not been born to the good fortune of an eldest son. This was far more than sufficient to atone for the comparative plainness of my person; and when it was discovered that I was also Sir William's favorite, it is quite astonishing what a beauty I became! Aubrey was declared too effeminate; Gerald too tall. And the Duchess of Lackland one day, when she had placed a lean, sallow, ghost of a daughter on either side of me, whispered my uncle in a voice, like the *aside* of a player, intended for none but the whole audience, that the young Count had the most imposing air and the finest eyes she had ever seen. All this inspired me with courage, as well as contempt; and not liking to be beholden solely to my priority of birth for my priority of distinction, I resolved to become as agreeable as possible. If I had not in the vanity of my heart resolved also to be

"myself alone," Fate would have furnished me at the happiest age for successful imitation with an admirable model.

Time rolled on—two years were flown since I had left school, and Montreuil was not yet returned. I had passed the age of eighteen, when the whole house, which, as it was summer, when none but cats and physicians were supposed gifted by Providence with the power to exist in town, was uncommonly full—the whole house, I say, was thrown into a positive fever of expectation. The visit of a guest, if not of greater consequence, at least of greater interest, than any who had hitherto honored my uncle, was announced. Even the young Count, with the most imposing air in the world, and the finest eyes, was forgotten by everybody but the Duchess of Lackland and her daughters, who had just returned to Devereux Court, to observe how amazingly the Count had grown! Oh! what a prodigy wisdom would be, if it were but blest with a memory as keen and constant as that of interest!

Struck with the universal excitement, I went to my uncle to inquire the name of the expected guest. My uncle was occupied in fanning the Lady Hasselton, a daughter of one of King Charles's Beauties. He had only time to answer me literally, and without comment; the guest's name was Mr. St. John.

I had never conned the "Flying Post," and I knew nothing about politics. "Who is Mr. St. John?" said I; my uncle had renewed the office of a zephyr. The daughter of the Beauty heard and answered, "The most charming person in England." I bowed and turned away. "How vastly explanatory!" said I. I met a furious politician. "Who is Mr. St. John?" I asked.

"The cleverest man in England," answered the politician, hurrying off with a pamphlet in his hand.

"Nothing can be more satisfactory," thought I. Stopping a coxcomb of the first water, "Who is Mr. St. John?" I asked.

"The finest gentleman in England," answered the coxcomb, settling his cravat.

"Perfectly intelligible!" was my reflection on this reply; and I forthwith arrested a Whig parson—"Who is Mr. St. John?" said I.

"The greatest reprobate in England!" answered the Whig parson, and I was too stunned to inquire more.

Five minutes afterwards the sound of carriage wheels was heard in the court-yard, then a slight bustle in the hall, and the door of the ante-room being thrown open, Mr. St. John entered.

He was in the very prime of life, about the middle height, and of a mien and air so strikingly noble that it was some time before you recovered the general effect of his person sufficiently to examine its peculiar claims to admiration. However, he lost nothing by a farther survey: he possessed not only an eminently handsome, but a very extraordinary countenance. Through an air of nonchalance, and even something of lassitude, through an ease of manners sometimes sinking into effeminate softness, sometimes bordering upon licentious effrontery, his eye thoughtful, yet wandering, seemed to announce that the mind partook but little of the whim of the moment, or of those levities of ordinary life over which the grace of his manner threw so peculiar a charm. His brow was, perhaps, rather too large and prominent, for the exactness of perfect symmetry; but it had an expression of great mental power and determination. His features were high, yet delicate, and his mouth, which, when closed, assumed a firm and rather severe expression, softened, when speaking, into a smile of almost magical enchantment. Richly, but not extravagantly dressed, he appeared to cultivate, rather than disdain, the ornaments of outward appearance; and whatever can fascinate or attract was so inherent in this singular man that all which in others would have been most artificial was in him most natural: so that it is no exaggeration to add that to be well dressed seemed to the elegance of his person not so much the result of art as of a property innate and peculiar to himself.

Such was the outward appearance of Henry St. John; one well suited to the qualities of a mind at once more vigorous and more accomplished than that of any other person with whom the vicissitudes of my life have ever brought me into contact.

I kept my eye on the new guest throughout the whole day; I observed the mingled liveliness and softness which pervaded his attentions to women, the intellectual, yet unpedantic superiority he possessed in his conversations with men; his respectful demeanor to age; his careless, yet not over familiar, ease with the

young; and, what interested me more than all, the occasional cloud which passed over his countenance at moments when he seemed sunk into a reverie that had for its objects nothing in common with those around him.

Just before dinner, St. John was talking to a little group, among whom curiosity seemed to have drawn the Whig parson whom I have before mentioned. He stood at a little distance, shy and uneasy; one of the company took advantage of so favorable a butt for jests, and alluded to the by-stander in a witticism which drew laughter from all but St. John, who, turning suddenly towards the parson, addressed an observation to him in the most respectful tone. Nor did he cease talking with him (fatiguing as the conference must have been, for never was there a duller ecclesiastic than the gentleman conversed with) until we descended to dinner. Then, for the first time, I learned that nothing can constitute good breeding that has not good nature for its foundation;—and then, too, as I was leading Lady Barbara Lackland to the great hall, by the tip of her fore-finger, I made another observation. Passing the priest, I heard him say to a fellow-clerk,

"Certainly, he is the greatest man in England;" and I mentally remarked, "there is no policy like politeness; and a good manner is the best thing in the world, either to get one a good name or to supply the want of it."

CHAPTER VI.

A Dialogue which might be dull if it were longer.

THREE days after the arrival of St. John, I escaped from the crowd of impertinents, seized a volume of Cowley, and, in a fit of mingled poetry and melancholy, strolled idly into the park. I came to the margin of the stream, and to the very spot on which I had stood with my uncle on the evening when he had first excited my emulation to scholastic rather than manual contention with my brother.—I seated myself by the water-side, and, feeling indisposed to read, leant my cheek upon my hand, and surrendered my thoughts as prisoners to the reflections which I could not resist.

I continued, I know not how long, in my meditation, till I was roused by a gentle touch upon my shoulder; I looked up, and saw St. John.

"Pardon me, Count," said he, smiling, "I should not have disturbed your reflections had not your neglect of an old friend emboldened me to address you upon his behalf."—And St. John pointed to the volume of Cowley which he had taken up without my perceiving it.

"Well," added he, seating himself on the turf beside me, "in my younger days, poetry and I were better friends than we are now. And if I had had Cowley as a companion, I should not have parted with him as you have done, even for my own reflections."

"You admire him, then?" said I.

"Why, that is too general a question. I admire what is fine in him, as in every one else, but I do not love him the better for his points and his conceits. He reminds me of what Cardinal Pallavicino said of Seneca, that he 'perfumes his conceits with civet and ambergris.' However, Count, I have opened upon a beautiful motto for you:

> Here let me, careless and unthoughtful lying,
> Hear the soft winds above me flying,
> With all their wanton boughs dispute,
> And the more tuneful birds to both replying;
> Nor be myself too mute.

What say you to that wish? If you have a germ of poetry in you, such verse ought to bring it into flower."

"Ay," answered I, though not exactly in accordance with the truth; "but I have not the germ. I destroyed it four years ago. Reading the dedications of poets cured me of the love for poetry. What a pity that the Divine Inspiration should have for its oracles such mean souls!"

"Yes, and how industrious the good gentlemen are in debasing themselves. Their ingenuity is never half so much shown in a simile as in a compliment; I know nothing in nature more melancholy than the discovery of any meanness in a great man. There is so little to redeem the dry mass of follies and errors from which the materials of this life are composed, that anything to love or to reverence becomes, as it were, the sabbath for the mind. It is bitter to feel, as we grow older, how the respite is abridged, and how the few objects left to our admiration are abased. What a foe not only to life, but to all that dignifies and

ennobles it, is Time. Our affections and our pleasures resemble those fabulous trees described by St. Oderic—the fruits which they bring forth are no sooner ripened into maturity than they are transformed into birds, and fly away. But these reflections cannot yet be familiar to you. Let us return to Cowley. Do you feel any sympathy with his prose writings? For some minds they have a great attraction."

"They have for mine," answered I; "but then I am naturally a dreamer; and a contemplative egotist is always to me a mirror in which I behold myself."

"The world," answered St. John, with a melancholy smile, "will soon dissolve, or for ever confirm, your humor for dreaming; in either case, Cowley will not be less a favorite. But you must, like me, have long toiled in the heat and travail of business, or of pleasure, which is more wearisome still, in order fully to sympathize with those beautiful panegyrics upon solitude which make, perhaps, the finest passages in Cowley. I have often thought that he whom God hath gifted with a love of retirement possesses, as it were, an extra sense. And among what our poet so eloquently calls 'the vast and noble scenes of nature,' we find the balm for the wounds we have sustained among the 'pitiful shifts of policy;' for the attachment to solitude is the surest preservative from the ills of life: and I know not if the Romans ever instilled, under allegory, a sublimer truth than when they inculcated the belief that those inspired by Feronia, the goddess of woods and forests, could walk barefoot and uninjured over burning coals."

At this part of our conference, the bell swinging hoarsely through the long avenues, and over the silent water, summoned us to the grand occupation of civilised life; we rose and walked slowly towards the house.

"Does not," said I, "this regular routine of petty occurrences—this periodical solemnity of trifles, weary and disgust you? For my part, I almost long for the old days of knight-errantry, and would rather be knocked on the head by a giant or carried through the air by a flying griffin, than live in this circle of dull regularities—the brute at the mill."

"You may live even in these days," answered St. John, "without too tame a regularity. Women and politics furnish ample food for adventure, and you must not judge of all life by country life."

"Nor of all conversation," said I, with a look which implied a compliment, "by the insipid idlers who fill our saloons. Behold them now, gathered by the oriel window, yonder; precious distillers of talk—sentinels of society with certain set phrases as watchwords, which they never exceed; sages, who follow Face's advice to Dapper—

"Hum thrice, and buzz as often."

CHAPTER VII.

A change of prospects—a new insight into the character of the Hero—a conference between two brothers.

A DAY or two after the conversation recorded in my last chapter, St. John, to my inexpressible regret, left us for London; however, we had enjoyed several conferences together during his stay, and when we parted, it was with a pressing invitation on his side to visit him in London, and a most faithful promise on mine, to avail myself of the request.

No sooner was he fairly gone than I went to seek my uncle; I found him reading one of Farquhar's comedies. Despite my sorrow at interrupting him in so venerable a study, I was too full of my new plot to heed breaking off that in the comedy. In very few words I made the good knight understand that his descriptions had infected me, and that I was dying to ascertain their truth; in a word, that his hopeful nephew was fully bent on going to town. My uncle first stared, then swore, then paused, then looked at his leg, drew up his stocking, frowned, whistled, and told me at last to talk to him about it another time. Now, for my part, I think there are only two classes of people in the world, authorized to put one off to "another time,"—prime ministers and creditors; —accordingly I would not take my uncle's dismissal. I had not read plays, studied philosophy, and laid snares for the Abbé Montreuil, without deriving some little wisdom from my experience; so I took to teazing, and a notable plan it is too! Whoever has pursued it may guess the result! My uncle yielded, and that day fortnight was fixed for my departure.

Oh! with what transport did I look forward to the completion of my wishes, the goal of my ambition. I hastened forth—I hurried into the woods—I sang out in the gladness of my heart, like a bird released—I drank in the air with a rapturous sympathy in its freedom; my step scarcely touched the earth, and my whole frame seemed ethereal—elated—exalted—by the vivifying inspiration of my hopes. I paused by a little streamlet, which, brawling over stones and through unpenetrated thicknesses of wood, seemed, like confined ambition, not the less restless for its obscurity.

"Wild brooklet," I cried, as my thoughts rushed into words, "fret on, our lot is no longer the same; your wanderings and your murmurs are wasted in solitude and shade; your voice dies and re-awakes, but without an echo; your waves spread around their path neither fertility nor terror; their anger is idle, and their freshness is lavished on a sterile soil; the sun shines in vain for you, through these unvarying wastes of silence and gloom; Fortune freights not your channel with her hoarded stores, and Pleasure ventures not her silken sails upon your tide; not even the solitary idler roves beside you, to consecrate with human fellowship your melancholy course; no shape of beauty bends over your turbid waters, or mirrors in your breast the loveliness that hallows earth. Lonely and sullen, through storm or sunshine, you repine along your desolate way and only catch, through the matted boughs that darken over you, the beams of the wan stars, which, like human hopes, tremble upon your breast and are broken, even before they fade, by the very turbulence of the surface on which they fall. Rove—repine—murmur on! Such was my fate, but the resemblance is no more. I shall no longer be a lonely and regretful being; my affections will no longer waste themselves upon barrenness and stone. I go among the living and warm world of mortal energies and desires; my existence shall glide alternately through crested cities, and bowers in which Poetry worships Love; and the clear depths of my heart shall reflect whatever its young dreams have shadowed forth — the visioned form—the gentle and fairy spirit—the Eve of my soul's imagined and foreboded paradise."

Venting, in this incoherent strain, the exultation which filled my thoughts, I wandered on, throughout the whole day, till my spirits had exhausted themselves by indulgence; and, wearied alike by mental excitement and bodily exertion, I turned, with slow steps, towards the house. As I ascended the gentle acclivity on which it stood, I saw a figure approaching towards me; the increasing shades of the evening did not allow me to recognize the shape until it was was almost by my side—it was Aubrey.

Of late I had seen very little of him. His devotional studies and habits seemed to draw him from the idle pursuits of myself and my uncle's guests; and Aubrey was one peculiarly susceptible of neglect, and sore, to morbidity, at the semblance of unkindness; so that he required to be sought, and rarely troubled others with advances: that night, however, his greeting was unusually warm.

"I was uneasy about you, Morton," said he, drawing my arm in his; "you have not been seen since morning; and, oh! Morton, my uncle told me, with tears in his eyes, that you were going to leave us. Is it so!"

"Had he tears in his eyes? Kind old man! And you, Aubrey, shall you, too, grieve for my departure?"

"Can you ask it, Morton? But why will you let us? Are we not all happy here, now? *Now* that there is no longer any barrier or difference between us—*now* that I may look upon you, and listen to you, and love you, and *own* that I love you? Why will you leave us now? And—(continued Aubrey, as if fearful of giving me time to answer)—and every one praises you so here; and my uncle and all of us are so proud of you. Why should you desert our affections merely because they are new? Why plunge into that hollow and cold world which all who have tried it picture in such fearful hues? Can you find anything there to repay you for the love you leave behind?"

"My brother," said I, mournfully, and in a tone which startled him, it was so different from that which I usually assumed,—"my brother, hear, before you reproach me. Let us sit down upon this bank, and I will suffer you to see more of my restless and secret heart than any hitherto have beheld."

We sat down upon a little mound—how well I remember the spot! I can see the tree which shadows it, from my window at this moment. How many seasons have the sweet herb and the emerald grass been withered there and re-

newed ! Ah, what is this revival of all things fresh and youthful in external nature, but a mockery of the wintry spot which lies perished and *irrenewable* within !

We drew near to each other, and as my arm wound around him, I said, "Aubrey, your love has been to me a more precious gift than any who have not, like me, thirsted and longed even for the love of a dog, can conceive. Never let me lose that affection ! And do not think of me hereafter as of one whose heart echoed all that his lip uttered. Do not believe that irony and sarcasm, and bitterness of tongue, flowed from a malignant or evil source. That disposition which seems to you alternately so light and gloomy had, perhaps, its origin in a mind too intense in its affections, and too exacting in having them returned. Till you sought my friendship, three short years ago, none but my uncle, with whom I could have nothing in common but attachment, seemed to care for my very existence. I blame them not; they were deceived in my nature; but blame *me* not too severely if my temper suffered from their mistake. Your friendship came to me, not too late to save me from a premature misanthropy, but too late to eradicate every morbidity of mind. Something of sternness on the one hand, and of satire on the other, has mingled so long with my better feelings that the taint and the stream have become inseparable. Do not sigh, Aubrey. To be unamiable is not to be ungrateful; and I shall not love you the less if I have but a few objects to love. You ask me my inducement to leave you. 'The World' will be sufficient answer. I cannot share your contempt of it, nor your fear. I am, and have been of late, consumed with a thirst—eager, and burning, and unquenchable—it is ambition !"

"Oh, Morton !" said Aubrey, with a second sigh, longer and deeper than the first—"that evil passion ! the passion which lost an angel Heaven."

"Let us not now dispute, my brother, whether it be sinful in itself, or whether, if its object be virtuous, it is not a virtue. In baring my soul before you, I only speak of my motives; and seek not to excuse them. Perhaps on this earth there is no good without a little evil. When my mind was once turned to the acquisition of mental superiority, every petty acquisition I made increased my desire to attain more, and partial emulation soon widened into universal ambition. We three, Gerald and ourselves, are the keepers of a treasure more valuable than gold—the treasure of a not ignoble nor sullied name. For my part, I confess that I am impatient to increase the store of honor which our father bequeathed to us. Nor is this all: despite our birth, we are poor in the gifts of fortune. We are all dependents on my uncle's favor; and, however we may deserve it, there would be something better in earning an independence for ourselves."

"That," said Aubrey, "may be an argument for mine and Gerald's exertions; but not for yours. You are the eldest, and my uncle's favorite. Nature and affection both point to you as his heir."

"If so, Aubrey, may many years pass before that inheritance be mine. Why should those years, that might produce so much, lie fallow ? But though I would not affect an unreal delicacy, and disown my chance of future fortune, yet you must remember that it is a matter possible, not certain. My birthright gives me no claim over my uncle, whose estates are in his own gift; and favor, even in the good, is a wind which varies without power on our side to calculate the season or the cause. However this be,—and I love the person on whom fortune depends so much that I cannot, without pain, speak of the mere chance of its passing from his possession into mine,—you will own at least that I shall not hereafter deserve wealth the less for the advantages of experience."

"Alas !" said Aubrey, raising his eyes, "the worship of our Father in Heaven finds us ample cause for occupation, even in retirement; and the more we mix with His creatures, the more, I fear, we may forget the Creator. But, if it must be so, I will pray for you, Morton; and you will remember that the powerless and poor Aubrey can still lift up his voice in your behalf."

As Aubrey thus spoke, I looked with mingled envy and admiration upon the countenance beside me, which the beauty of a spirit seemed at once to soften and to exalt.

Since our conference had begun, the dusk of twilight had melted away; and the moon had called into lustre—living, indeed, but unlike the common and unhallowing life of day—the wood and herbage, and silent variations of hill and valley, which slept around us; and, as the

still and shadowy light fell over the upward face of my brother, it gave to his features an additional, and not wholly earth-born, solemnity of expression. There was indeed in his face and air that from which the painter of a seraph might not have disdained to copy; something resembling the vision of an angel in the dark eyes that swam with tears, in which emotion had so little of mortal dross—in the youthful and soft cheeks, which the earnestness of divine thought had refined by a pale but transparent hue—in the high and unclouded forehead, over which the hair, parted in the centre, fell in long and wavelike curls—and in the lips, silent, yet moving with internal prayer, which seemed the more fervent, because unheard.

I did not interrupt him in the prayer, which my soul felt, though my ear caught it not, was for me. But when he had ceased, and turned towards me, I clasped him to my breast. "My brother," I said, "we shall part, it is true, but not till our hearts have annihilated the space that was between them; not till we have felt that the love of brotherhood can pass the love of woman. Whatever await you, your devoted and holy mind will be, if not your shield from affliction, at least your balm for its wounds. Remain here. The quiet which breathes around you well becomes your tranquillity within; and sometimes bless me in your devotions, as you have done now. For me, I shall not regret those harder and harsher qualities which you blame in me; if hereafter their very sternness can afford me an opportunity of protecting your gentleness from evil, or redressing the wrongs from which your nature may be too innocent to preserve you. And now let us return home, in the conviction that we have in our friendship one treasure beyond the reach of fate."

Aubrey did not answer; but he kissed my forehead, and I felt his tears upon my cheek. We rose, and with arms still embracing each other as we walked, bent our steps to the house.

Ah, earth! what hast thou more beautiful than the love of those whose ties are knit by nature, and whose union seems ordained to begin from the very moment of their birth?

CHAPTER VIII.

First Love.

We are under very changeful influences in this world! The night on which occurred the interview with Aubrey, that I have just narrated, I was burning to leave Devereux Court. Within one little week from that time my eagerness was wonderfully abated. The sagacious reader will readily discover the cause of this alteration. About eight miles from my uncle's house was a seaport town; there were many and varied rides leading to it, and the town was a favorite place of visitation with all the family. Within a few hundred yards of the town was a small cottage, prettily situated in the midst of a garden, kept with singular neatness, and ornamented with several rare shrubs and exotics. I had more than once observed in the garden of this house a female in the very first blush of youth, and beautiful enough to excite within me a strong curiosity to learn the owner of the cottage. I inquired, and ascertained that its tenant was a Spaniard of high birth, and one who had acquired a melancholy celebrity by his conduct and misfortunes in the part he had taken in a certain feeble but gallant insurrection in his native country. He had only escaped with life and a very small sum of money, and now lived in the obscure seaport of ——, a refugee and a recluse. He was a widower, and had only one child—a daughter; and I was therefore at no loss to discover who was the beautiful female I had noted and admired.

On the day after my conversation with Aubrey, detailed in the last chapter, in riding past this cottage alone, I perceived a crowd assembled round the entrance; I paused to inquire the cause.

"Why, your honor," quoth a senior of the village, "I believe the tipstaves be come to take the foreigner for not paying his rent; and he does not understand our English liberty like, and has drawn his sword, and swears in his outlandish lingo, he will not be made prisoner alive."

I required no further inducement to make me enter the house. The crowd gave way when they saw me dismount, and suffered me to penetrate into the first apartment. There I found the gallant old Spaniard with his sword

drawn, keeping at bay a couple of sturdy looking men, who appeared to be only prevented from using violence by respect for the person, or the safety of a young woman, who clung to her father's knees, and implored him not to resist, where resistance was so unavailing. Let me cut short this scene—I dismissed the bailiffs, and paid the debt. I then endeavored to explain to the Spaniard, in French, for he scarcely understood three words of our language, the cause of a rudeness towards him which he persisted in calling a great insult and inhospitality manifested to a stranger and an exile. I succeeded at length in pacifying him. I remained for more than an hour at the cottage, and I left it with a heart beating at the certain persuasion that I had established therein the claim of acquaintance and visitation.

Will the reader pardon me for having curtailed this scene? It is connected with a subject on which I shall better endure to dwell as my narrative proceeds. From that time I paid frequent visits to the cottage; the Spaniard soon grew intimate with me, and I thought the daughter began to blush when I entered, and to sigh when I departed.

One evening I was conversing with Don Diego D'Alvarez (such was the Spaniard's name), as he sat without his threshold, inhaling the gentle air, that stole freshness from the rippling sea that spread before us, and fragrance from the earth, over which the summer now reigned in its most mellow glory. Isora (the daughter) sat at a little distance.

"How comes it," said Don Diego, "that you have never met our friend Señor Bar—Bar—these English names are always escaping my memory. How is he called, Isora?"

"Mr.—Mr. Barnard," said Isora (who, brought early to England, spoke its language like a native), but with evident confusion, and looking down as she spoke—"Mr. Barnard, I believe you mean."

"Right, my love," rejoined the Spaniard, who was smoking a long pipe with great gravity, and did not notice his daughter's embarrassment—"a fine youth, but somewhat shy and over-modest in manner."

"Youth!" thought I, and I darted a piercing look towards Isora. "How comes it, indeed," I said aloud, "that I have not met him? Is he a friend of long standing?"

"Nay, not very—perhaps of some six weeks earlier date than you, Señor Don Devereux. I pressed him, when he called this morning, to tarry your coming; but, poor youth, he is diffident, and not yet accustomed to mix freely with strangers, especially those of rank; our own presence a little overawes him"—and from Don Diego's gray mustachios issued a yet fuller cloud than was ordinarily wont to emerge thence.

My eyes were still fixed on Isora; she looked up, met them, blushed deeply, rose, and disappeared within the house. I was already susceptible of jealousy. My lip trembled, as I resumed: "And will Don Diego pardon me for inquiring how commenced his knowledge of this ingenuous youth?"

The question was a little beyond the pale of good breeding; perhaps the Spaniard, who was tolerably punctilious in such matters, thought so, for he did not reply. I was sensible of my error, and apologizing for it, insinuated, nevertheless, the question in a more respectful and covert shape. Still Don Diego, inhaling the fragrant weed with renewed vehemence, only—like Pion's tomb, recorded by Pausanias—replied to the request of his petitioner *by smoke*. I did not venture to renew my interrogatories, and there was a long silence. My eyes fixed their gaze on the door by which Isora had disappeared. In vain; she returned not—and as the chill of the increasing evening began now to make itself felt by the frame of one accustomed to warmer skies, the Spaniard soon rose to re-enter his house, and I took my farewell for the night.

There were many ways (as I before said) by which I could return home, all nearly equal in picturesque beauty; for the county in which my uncle's estates were placed was one where stream roved and woodland flourished even to the very strand, or cliff of the sea. The shortest *route*, though one the least frequented by any except foot-passengers, was along the coast, and it was by this path that I rode slowly homeward. On winding a curve in the road about one mile from Devereux Court, the old building broke slowly, tower by tower, upon me. I have never yet described the house, and perhaps it will not be uninteresting to the reader if I do so now.

It had anciently belonged to Ralph de Bigod. From his possession it had passed into that of the then noblest branch of the stem of Deve-

reux, whence, without break or flaw in the direct line of heritage, it had ultimately descended to the present owner. It was a pile of vast extent, built around three quadrangular courts, the farthest of which spread to the very verge of the gray, tall cliffs that overhung the sea: in this court was a rude tower, which, according to tradition, had contained the apartments ordinarily inhabited by our ill-fated namesake and distant kinsman, Robert Devereux, the favorite and the victim of Elizabeth, whenever he had honored the mansion with a visit. There was nothing, it is true, in the old tower calculated to flatter the tradition, for it contained only two habitable rooms, communicating with each other, and by no means remarkable for size or splendor; and every one of our household, save myself, was wont to discredit the idle rumor which would assign to so distinguished a guest so unseemly a lodgment. But, as I looked from the narrow lattices of the chambers, over the wide expanse of ocean and of land which they commanded—as I noted, too, that the tower was utterly separated from the rest of the house, and that the convenience of its site enabled one, on quitting it, to escape at once, and privately, either to the solitary beach, or to the glades and groves of the wide park which stretched behind—I could not help indulging the belief that the unceremonious, and not unromantic noble, had himself selected his place of retirement, and that, in so doing, the gallant of a stately court was not, perhaps, undesirous of securing at well-chosen moments a brief relaxation from the heavy honors of country homage—or that the patron and poetic admirer of the dreaming Spenser might have preferred, to all more gorgeous accommodation, the quiet and unseen egress to that sea and shore, which, if we may believe the accomplished Roman,* are so fertile in the powers of inspiration.

However this be, I had cheated myself into the belief that my conjecture was true, and I had petitioned my uncle, when, on leaving school, he assigned to each of us our several apartments, to grant me the exclusive right to this dilapidated tower. I gained my boon easily enough; and,—so strangely is our future fate compounded from past trifles,—I verily believe that the strong desire which thenceforth seized me to visit courts, and mix with statesmen—which afterwards hurried me into intrigue, war, the plots of London, the dissipations of Paris, the perilous schemes of Petersburg, nay, the very hardships of a Cossack tent—was first formed by the imaginary honor of inhabiting the same chamber as the glittering but ill-fated courtier of my own name. Thus youth imitates, where it should avoid; and thus that which should have been to me a warning became an example.

In the oaken floor to the outer chamber of this tower was situated a trap-door, the entrance into a lower room or rather cell, fitted up as a bath; and here a wooden door opened into a long subterranean passage that led out into a cavern by the sea-shore. This cave, partly by nature, partly by art, was hollowed into a beautiful Gothic form: and here, on moonlight evenings, when the sea crept gently over the yellow and smooth sands, and the summer tempered the air from too keen a freshness, my uncle had often in his younger days, ere gout and rheum had grown familiar images, assembled his guests. It was a place which the echoes peculiarly adapted for music; and the scene was certainly not calculated to diminish the effect of "sweet sounds." Even now, though my uncle rarely joined us, we were often wont to hold our evening revels in this spot; and the high cliffs, circling either side in the form of a bay, tolerably well concealed our meetings from the gaze of the vulgar. It is true (for these cliffs were perforated with numerous excavations), that some roving peasant, mariner, or perchance smuggler, would now and then, at lower water, intrude upon us. But our London Nereids and courtly Tritons were always well pleased with the interest of what they graciously termed "an adventure:" and our assemblies were too numerous to think an unbroken secrecy indispensable. Hence, therefore, the cavern was almost considered a part of the house itself; and though there was an iron door at the entrance which it gave to the passage leading to my apartments, yet so great was our confidence in our neighbors or ourselves that it was rarely secured, save as a defence against the high tides of winter.

The stars were shining quietly over the old

* "O mare, O litus, verum secretumque Μουσειον, quam multa dictatis — quam multa invenitis!"—PLINIUS.

"O sea, O shore, true and secret sanctuary of the Muses, how many things ye dictate, how many things ye discover."

gray castle (for castle it really was), as I now came within view of it. To the left, and in the rear of the house, the trees of the park, grouped by distance, seemed blent into one thick mass of wood; to the right, as I now (descending the cliff by a gradual path) entered on the level sands, and at about the distance of a league from the main shore, a small islet, notorious as the resort and shelter of contraband adventurers, scarcely relieved the wide and glassy azure of the waves. The tide was out; and passing through one of the arches worn in the bay, I came somewhat suddenly by the cavern. Seated there on a crag of stone I found Aubrey.

My acquaintance with Isora and her father had so immediately succeeded the friendly meeting with Aubrey which I last recorded, and had so utterly engrossed my time and thoughts, that I had not taken of that interview all the brotherly advantage which I might have done. My heart now smote me for my involuntary negligence. I dismounted, and fastening my horse to one of a long line of posts that ran into the sea, approached Aubrey and accosted him.

"Alone, Aubrey? and at an hour when my uncle always makes the old walls ring with revel! Hark, can you not hear the music even now? it comes from the ball-room, I think, does it not?"

"Yes!" said Aubrey, briefly, and looking down upon a devotional book, which (as was his wont) he had made his companion.

"And we are the only truants!—Well, Gerald will supply our places with a lighter step, and, perhaps, a merrier heart."

Aubrey sighed. I bent over him affectionately (I loved that boy with something of a father's as well as a brother's love), and as I did bend over him, I saw that his eyelids were red with weeping.

"My brother—my own dear brother," said I, "what grieves you?—are we not friends, and more than friends?—what can grieve you that grieves not me?"

Suddenly raising his head, Aubrey gazed at me with a long, searching intentness of eye; his lips moved, but he did not answer.

"Speak to me, Aubrey," said I, passing my arm over his shoulder; "has any one, any thing, hurt you? See, now, if I cannot remedy the evil."

"Morton," said Aubrey, speaking very slowly, "do you believe that Heaven pre-orders as well as foresees our destiny?"

"It is the schoolman's question," said I, smiling, "but I know how these idle subtleties vex the mind—and you, my brother, are ever too occupied with considerations of the future. If Heaven *does* pre-order our destiny, we know that Heaven is merciful, and we should be fearless, as we arm ourselves in that knowledge."

"Morton Devereux," said Aubrey, again repeating my name, and with an evident inward effort that left his lip colorless, and yet lit his dark dilating eye with a strange and unwonted fire—"Morton Devereux, I feel that I am predestined to the power of the Evil One!"

I drew back, inexpressibly shocked. "Good Heavens!" I exclaimed, "what can induce you to cherish so terrible a phantasy? what can induce you to wrong so fearfully the goodness and mercy of our Creator?"

Aubrey shrunk from my arm, which had still been round him, and covered his face with his hands. I took up the book he had been reading: it was a Latin treatise on predestination, and seemed fraught with the most gloomy and bewildering subtleties. I sat down beside him, and pointed out the various incoherencies and contradictions of the work, and the doctrine it espoused—so long and so earnestly did I speak that at length Aubrey looked up, seemingly cheered and relieved.

"I wish," said he timidly, "I wish that you loved me, and that you loved *me only*:—but you love pleasure, and power, and show, and wit, and revelry; and you know not what it is to feel for me, as I feel at times for you—nay, perhaps you really dislike or despise me!"

Aubrey's voice grew bitter in its tone as he concluded these words, and I was instantly impressed with the belief that some one had insinuated distrust of my affection for him.

"Why should you think thus?" I said: "has any cause occurred of late to make you deem my affection for you weaker than it was? Has any one hinted a surmise that I do not repay your brotherly regard?"

Aubrey did not answer.

"Has Gerald," I continued, "jealous of our mutual attachment, uttered aught tending to diminish it? Yes, I see that he has!"

Aubrey remained motionless, sullenly gazing downward, and still silent.

"Speak," said I, "in justice to both of us—speak! You know, Aubrey, how I *have* loved and love you: put your arms round me, and say that thing on earth which you wish me to do, and it shall be done!"

Aubrey looked up; he met my eyes, and he threw himself upon my neck, and burst into a violent paroxysm of tears.

I was greatly affected. "I see my fault," said I, soothing him; "you are angry, and with justice, that I have neglected you of late; and, perhaps, while I ask your confidence, you suspect that there is some subject on which I should have granted you mine. You are right, and, at a fitter moment, I will. Now let us turn homeward: our uncle is never merry when we are absent; and when my mother misses your dark locks and fair cheek, I fancy that she sees little beauty in the ball. And yet, Aubrey," I added, as he now rose from my embrace, and dried his tears, "I will own to you that I love this scene better than any, however gay, within;" and I turned to the sea, starlit as it was, and murmuring with a silver voice, and I became suddenly silent.

There was a long pause. I believe we both felt the influence of the scene around us, softening and tranquillizing our hearts; for, at length, Aubrey put his hand in mine, and said, "You were always more generous and kind than I, Morton, though there are times when you seem different from what you are; and I know you have already forgiven me."

I drew him affectionately towards me, and we went home.

But although I meant, from that night, to devote myself more to Aubrey than I had done of late, my hourly increasing love for Isora interfered greatly with my resolution. In order, however, to excuse any future neglect, I, the very next morning, bestowed upon him my con-

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yet time passed o
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I raised her from the earth, and supported her in my arms; her complexion—through whose pure and transparent white, the wandering blood was wont so gently, yet so glowingly, to blush, undulating while it blushed, as youngest rose-leaves which the air just stirs into trembling—was blanched into the hues of death. My kisses tinged it with a momentary color not its own; and yet as I pressed her to my heart, methought hers, which seemed still before, began, as if by an involuntary sympathy, palpably and suddenly to throb against my own. My alarm melted away as I held her thus—nay, I would not, if I could, have recalled her *yet* to life;—I was forgetful—I was unheeding—I was unconscious of all things else—a few broken and passionate words escaped my lips, but even they ceased when I felt her breath just stirring and mingling with my own. It seemed to me as if all living kind but ourselves had, by a spell, departed from the earth, and we were left alone with the breathless and inaudible Nature from which spring the love and the life of all things.

Isora slowly recovered; her eyes, in opening, dwelt upon mine—her blood rushed at once to her cheek, and as suddenly left it hueless as before. She rose from my embrace, but I still extended my arms towards her; and words over which I had no control, and of which now I have no remembrance, rushed from my lips. Still pale, and leaning against the side of the arbor, Isora heard me, as—confused, incoherent, impetuous, but still intelligible to her—my released heart poured itself forth. And when I had ceased, she turned her face towards me, and my blood seemed at once frozen in its channel. Anguish, deep, ineffable anguish, was depicted upon every feature; and when she strove at last to speak, her lips quivered

Isora, lay a man's glove. A
me—I felt my eyes flash
darken, as I turned to Isor
it—I see all,—I have a rival
left you—you love me not—
for him!"—Isora sobbed
no reply. "You love him,
milder and more mournfu
him—it is enough—I will
more; and yet—" I paus
the remembrance of many
heart had interpreted flatter
me, and my voice faltered:
right to murmur—only, Is
with your lips that you love
depart in peace."

Very slowly Isora turne
and even through her tear
me with a tender and a soft

"You love another?"
her lips, which scarcely pa
word which thrilled to my
"*No!*"

"No!" I repeated, "No
and again;—yet who then is
so to agitate and overpower
whom you have met, and
while I speak, you tremble
to? Answer me one word—
ous stranger whom your fat
friendship?—is it Barnard?

Alarm and fear again wh
expression of Isora's counte

"Barnard!" she said,
Barnard!"

"Who is he?" I cried
or what is he?—and of what
fluence upon you? Confid
poured forth a long tide of
tation.

I cannot—" here she spoke with a fearful distinctness,—"I cannot, I can never, be yours; and when you ask me to be so, you know not what you ask nor what perils you incur.—Enough—I am grateful to you. The poor exiled girl is grateful for your esteem—and—and your affection. She will never forget them,—never! But be this our last meeting—our very last—God bless you, Morton!" and, as she read my heart, pierced and agonized as it was, in my countenance, Isora bent over me, for I knelt beside her, and I felt her tears upon my cheek,—"God bless you—and farewell."

"You insult, you wound me," said I bitterly, "by this cold and taunting kindness; tell me, tell me only, who it is that you love better than me."

Isora had turned to leave me, for I was too proud to detain her; but when I said this, she came back, after a moment's pause, and laid her hand upon my arm.

"If it make you happy to know *my* unhappiness," she said, and the tone of her voice made me look full in her face, which was one deep blush, "know that I am not insensible—"

I heard no more—my lips pressed themselves involuntarily to hers—a long, long kiss—burning—intense—concentrating emotion, heart, soul, all the rays of life's light into a single focus;—and she tore herself from me—and I was alone.

CHAPTER IX.

A Discovery, and a Departure.

I HASTENED home after my eventful interview with Isora, and gave myself up to tumultuous and wild conjecture. Aubrey sought me the next morning—I narrated to him all that had occurred—he said little, but that little enraged me, for it was contrary to the dictates of my own wishes. The character of Morose in the "Silent Woman," is by no means an uncommon one. Many men—certainly many lovers—would say with equal truth, always provided they had equal candor—"All discourses but my own afflict me; they seem harsh, impertinent, and irksome." Certainly I felt that amiable sentiment most sincerely, with regard to Aubrey. I left him abruptly—a resolution possessed me—"I will see," said I, "this Barnard; I will lie in wait for him; I will demand and obtain, though it be by force, the secret which evidently subsists between him and this exiled family."

Full of this idea, I drew my cloak round me, and repaired on foot to the neighborhood of the Spaniard's cottage. There was no place near it very commodious for accommodation both of vigil and concealment. However, I made a little hill, in a field opposite the house, my warder's station, and, lying at full length on the ground, wrapt in my cloak, I trusted to escape notice. The day passed—no visitor appeared. The next morning I went from my own rooms, through the subterranean passage, into the Castle Cave, as the excavation I have before described, was generally termed. On the shore I saw Gerald, by one of the small fishing boats usually kept there. I passed him with a sneer at his amusements, which were always those of conflicts against fish or fowl. He answered me in the same strain, as he threw his nets into the boat, and pushed out to sea. "How is it, that you go alone?" said I; "is there so much glory in the capture of mackerel and dogfish that you will allow no one to share it?"

"There are other sports besides those for men," answered Gerald, coloring indignantly, "my taste is confined to amusements in which he is but a fool who seeks companionship; and if you could read character better, my wise brother, you would know that the bold rover is ever less idle and more fortunate than the speculative dreamer!"

As Gerald said this, which he did with a significant emphasis, he rowed vigorously across the water, and the little boat was soon half way to the opposite islet. My eyes followed it musingly as it glided over the waves, and my thoughts painfully revolved the words which Gerald had uttered. "What can he mean?" said I, half aloud, "yet what matters it?—perhaps some low amour, some village conquest, inspires him with that becoming fulness of pride and vain glory—joy be with so bold a rover!" and I strode away, along the beach, towards my place of watch; once only I turned to look at Gerald—he had then just touched the islet, which was celebrated as much for the fishing it afforded as the smuggling it protected.

I arrived, at last, at the hillock, and resumed my station. Time passed on, till, at the dusk of evening, the Spaniard came out. He walked slowly towards the town; I followed him at a distance. Just before he reached the town, he turned off by a path which led to the beach. As the evening was unusually fresh and chill, I felt convinced that some cause, not wholly trivial, drew the Spaniard forth to brave it. My pride a little revolted at the idea of following him; but I persuaded myself that Isora's happiness, and perhaps her father's safety, depended on my obtaining some knowledge of the character and designs of this Barnard, who appeared to possess so dangerous an influence over both daughter and sire—nor did I doubt but that the old man was now gone forth to meet him. The times were those of mystery and of intrigue—the emissaries of the House of Stuart were restlessly at work, among all classes—many of them, obscure and mean individuals, made their way, the more dangerously from their apparent insignificance. My uncle, a moderate tory, was opposed, though quietly, and without vehemence, to the claims of the banished House. Like Sedley, who became so staunch a revolutionist, he had seen the Court of Charles II., and the character of that King's brother, too closely to feel much respect for either; but he thought it indecorous to express opposition loudly, against a party among whom were many of his early friends; and the good old knight was too much attached to private ties to be very much alive to public feeling. However, at his well-filled board, conversation, generally, though displeasingly to himself, turned upon politics, and I had there often listened, of late, to dark hints of the danger to which we were exposed, and of the restless machinations of the Jacobites. I did not, therefore, scruple to suspect this Barnard of some plot against the existing state; and I did it the more from observing that the Spaniard often spoke bitterly of the English Court, which had rejected some claims he had imagined himself entitled to make upon it; and that he was naturally of a temper vehemently opposed to quiet, and alive to enterprise. With this impression, I deemed it fair to seize any opportunity of seeing, at least, even if I could not question, the man whom the Spaniard himself confessed to have state reasons for concealment; and my anxiety to behold one whose very name could agitate Isora, and whose presence could occasion the state in which I had found her, sharpened this desire into the keenness of a passion.

While Alvarez descended to the beach, I kept the upper path, which wound along the cliff. There was a spot where the rocks were rude and broken into crags, and afforded me a place where, unseen, I could behold what passed below. The first thing I beheld was a boat, approaching rapidly towards the shore; one man was seated in it; he reached the shore, and I recognized Gerald. That was a dreadful moment. Alvarez now slowly joined him; they remained together for nearly an hour. I saw Gerald give the Spaniard a letter, which appeared to make the chief subject of their conversation. At length they parted, with the signs rather of respect than familiarity. Don Diego returned homeward, and Gerald reentered the boat. I watched its progress over the waves with feelings of a dark and almost unutterable nature. "My enemy! my rival! ruiner of my hopes!—*my brother!—my twin brother!*"—I muttered bitterly between my ground teeth.

The boat did not make to the open sea—it skulked along the shore, till distance and shadow scarcely allowed me to trace the outline of Gerald's figure. It then touched the beach, and I could just descry the dim shape of another man enter; and Gerald, instead of returning homewards, pushed out towards the islet. I spent the greater part of the night in the open air. Wearied and exhausted, by the furious indulgence of my passions, I gained my room, at length. There, however, as elsewhere, thought succeeded to thought, and scheme to scheme. Should I speak to Gerald? Should I confide in Alvarez? Should I renew my suit to Isora? If the first, what could I hope to learn from mine enemy? If the second, what could I gain from the father, while the daughter remained averse to me? If the third—there my heart pointed, and the third scheme I resolved to adopt.

But was I sure that Gerald was this Barnard? Might there not be some hope that he was not? No, I could perceive none. Alvarez had never spoken to me of acquaintance with any any other Englishman than Barnard; I had no reason to believe that he ever held converse with any other. Would it not have been

natural too, unless some powerful cause, such as love to Isora, induced silence—would it not have been natural that Gerald should have mentioned his acquaintance with the Spaniard? —Unless some dark scheme, such as that which Barnard appeared to have in common with Don Diego, commanded obscurity, would it have been likely that Gerald should have met Alvarez alone—at night—on an unfrequented spot? What the scheme *was*, I guessed not—I cared not. All my interest in the identity of Barnard with Gerald Devereux, was that derived from the power he seemed to possess over Isora. Here, too, at once, was explained the pretended Barnard's desire of concealment, and the vigilance with which it had been effected. It was so certain that Gerald, if my rival, would seek to avoid me—it was so easy for him, who could watch all my motions, to secure the power of doing so. Then I remembered Gerald's character through the country, as a gallant and a general lover—and I closed my eyes as if to shut out the vision when I recalled the beauty of his form, contrasted with the comparative plainness of my own.

"There is no hope," I repeated—and an insensibility, rather than sleep, crept over me. Dreadful and fierce dreams peopled my slumbers; and when I started from them at a late hour the next day, I was unable to rise from my bed—my agitation and my wanderings had terminated in a burning fever. In four days, however, I recovered sufficiently to mount my horse—I rode to the Spaniard's house, I found there only the woman who had been Don Diego's solitary domestic. The morning before, Alvarez and his daughter had departed, none knew for certain whither; but it was supposed their destination was London. The woman gave me a note—it was from Isora—it contained only these lines:—

"Forget me—we are now parted for ever. As you value my peace of mind—of happiness I do not speak—seek not to discover our next retreat. I implore you to think no more of what has been; you are young, very young. Life has a thousand paths for you; any one of them will lead you from the remembrance of me. Farewell, again and again!

ISORA D'ALVAREZ."

With this note was another, in French, from Don Diego; it was colder and more formal than I could have expected—it thanked me for my attentions towards him—it regretted that he could not take leave of me in person, and it enclosed the sum by the loan of which our acquaintance had commenced.

"It is well!" said I, calmly, to myself, "it is well; I will forget her:" and I rode instantly home. "But," I resumed in my soliloquy, "I will yet strive to obtain confirmation to what perhaps needs it not. I will yet strive to see if Gerald can deny the depth of his injuries towards me—there will be at least some comfort in witnessing either his defiance or his confusion."

Agreeably to this thought, I hastened to seek Gerald. I found him in his apartment—I shut the door, and seating myself, with a smile, thus addressed him:

"Dear Gerald, I have a favor to ask of you."

"What is it?"

"How long have you known a certain Mr. Barnard?" Gerald changed color—his voice faltered as he repeated the name "Barnard!"

"Yes," said I, with affected composure, "Barnard! a great friend of Don Diego D'Alvarez."

"I perceive," said Gerald, collecting himself, "that you are in some measure acquainted with my secret—how far it is known to you I cannot guess; but I tell you, very fairly, that from me you will not increase the sum of your knowledge."

When one is in a good sound rage, it is astonishing how calm one can be! I was certainly somewhat amazed by Gerald's hardihood and assurance, but I continued, with a smile—

"And Donna Isora, how long, if not very intrusive on your confidence, have you known her?"

"I tell you," answered Gerald, doggedly, "that I will answer no questions."

"You remember the old story," returned I, "of the two brothers, Eteocles and Polynices, whose very ashes refused to mingle—faith, Gerald, our love seems much of the same sort. I know not if our ashes will exhibit so laudable an antipathy; but I think our hearts and hands will do so while a spark of life animates them; yes, though our blood," (I added, in a voice quivering with furious emotion,) "prevents our contest by the sword, it prevents not the hatred and the curses of the heart."

Gerald turned pale. "I do not understand

you," he faltered out—"I know you abhor me; but why, why this excess of malice?"

I cast on him a look of bitter scorn, and turned from the room.

It is not pleasing to place before the reader these dark passages of fraternal hatred; but in the record of all passions there is a moral; and it is wise to see to how vast a sum the units of childish animosity swell, when they are once brought into a heap, by some violent event, and told over by the nice accuracy of Revenge.

But I long to pass from these scenes, and my history is about to glide along others of more glittering and smiling aspect. Thank Heaven, I write a tale, not only of love, but of a life; and that which I cannot avoid I can at least condense.

CHAPTER X.

A very short Chapter—containing a Valet.

My uncle for several weeks had flattered himself that I had quite forgotten or foregone the desire of leaving Devereux Court for London. Good easy man! he was not a little distressed when I renewed the subject with redoubled firmness, and demanded an early period for that event. He managed, however, still to protract the evil day. At one time it was impossible to part with me, because the house was so full; at another time it was cruel to leave him, when the house was so empty. Meanwhile a new change came over me. As the first shock of Isora's departure passed away, I began to suspect the purity of her feelings towards me. Might not Gerald, the beautiful, the stately, the glittering Gerald, have been a successful wooer under that disguised name of Barnard, and *hence* Isora's confusion when that name was mentioned, and hence the power which its possessor exercised over her?

This idea, once admitted, soon gained ground. It is true that Isora had testified something of favorable feelings towards me; but this might spring from coquetry or compassion. My love had been a boy's love, founded upon beauty and colored by romance. I had not investigated the character of the object; and I had judged of the mind solely by the face. I might easily have been deceived—I persuaded myself that I was! Perhaps Gerald had provided their present retreat for sire and daughter—perhaps they at this moment laughed over my rivalry and my folly. Methought Gerald's lip wore a contemptuous curve when we met. "It shall have no cause," I said, stung to the soul; "I will indeed forget this woman, and yet, though in other ways, eclipse this rival. Pleasure—ambition—the brilliancy of a Court—the resources of wealth invite me to a thousand joys. I will not be deaf to the call. Meanwhile I will not betray to Gerald—to any one—the scar of the wound I have received; and I will mortify Gerald, by showing him that, handsome as he is, he shall be forgotten in my presence!"

Agreeably to this exquisite resolution, I paid incessant court to the numerous dames by whom my uncle's mansion was thronged; and I resolved to prepare, among them, the reputation for gallantry and for wit which I proposed to establish in town.

"You are greatly altered since your love!" said Aubrey, one day to me, "but not by your love. Own that I did right in dissuading you from its indulgence!"

"Tell me!" said I, sinking my voice to a whisper, "do you think Gerald was my rival?" and I recounted the causes of my suspicion.

Aubrey's countenance testified astonishment as he listened—"It is strange—very strange," said he; "and the evidence of the boat is almost conclusive; still I do not think it quite sufficient to leave no loop-hole of doubt. But what matters it?—you have conquered your love now."

"Ay," I said, with a laugh, "I have conquered it, and I am now about to find some other empress of the heart. What think you of the Lady Hasselton?—a fair dame and a sprightly. I want nothing but her love to be the most enviable of men, and a French *valet-de-chambre* to be the most irresistible."

"The former is easier to obtain than the latter, I fear," returned Aubrey; "all places produce light dames, but the war makes a scarcity of French valets."

"True," said I, "but I never thought of instituting a comparison between their relative value. The Lady Hasselton, no disparagement to her merits, is but one woman—but a French valet who knows his *métier*, arms one for conquest over a thousand"—and I turned to the saloon.

Fate, which had destined to me the valuable affections of the Lady Hasselton, granted me also, at a yet earlier period, the greater boon of a French valet. About two or three weeks after this sapient communication with Aubrey, the most charming person in the world presented himself a candidate *pour le suprême bonheur de soigner Monsieur le Comte.* Intelligence beamed in his eye; a modest assurance reigned upon his brow; respect made his step vigilant as a zephyr's; and his ruffles were the envy of the world!

I took him at a glance; and I presented to the admiring inmates of the house a greater coxcomb than the Count Devereux in the ethereal person of Jean Desmarais.

CHAPTER XI.

The Hero acquits himself honorably as a Coxcomb—a Fine Lady of the Eighteenth Century, and a fashionable Dialogue—the Substance of fashionable Dialogue being in all Centuries the same.

"I AM thinking, Morton," said my uncle, "that if you are to go to town, you should go in a style suitable to your rank. What say you to flying along the road in my green and gold chariot? 'Sdeath, I'll make you a present of it. Nay—no thanks—and you may have four of my black Flanders mares to draw you."

"Now, my dear Sir William," cried Lady Hasselton, who, it may be remembered, was the daughter of one of King Charles's beauties, and who alone shared the breakfast room with my uncle and myself—"now, my dear Sir William, I think it would be a better plan to suffer the Count to accompany us to town. We go next week. He shall have a seat in our coach—help Lovell to pay our post-horses—protect us at inns—scold at the drawers in the pretty oaths of the fashion, which are so innocent that I will teach them to his Countship myself, and unless I am much more frightful than my honored mother, whose beauties you so gallantly laud, I think you will own, Sir William, that this is better for your nephew than doing solitary penance in your chariot of green and gold, with a handkerchief tied over his head to keep away cold, and with no more fanciful occupation than composing sonnets to the four Flanders mares."

"'Sdeath, madam, you inherit your mother's wit as well as beauty," cried my uncle, with an impassioned air.

"And his Countship," said I, "will accept your invitation without asking his uncle's leave."

"Come, that is bold for a gentleman of—let me see, thirteen—are you not?"

"Really," answered I, "one learns to forget time so terribly in the presence of Lady Hasselton, that I do not remember even how long it has existed for me."

"Bravo," cried the knight, with a moistening eye: "you see, madam, the boy has not lived with his old uncle for nothing."

"I am lost in astonishment," said the lady, glancing toward the glass; "why, you will eclipse all our beaux at your first appearance—but—but—Sir William—how green those glasses have become? bless me, there is something so contagious in the effects of the country, that the very mirrors grow verdant. But—Count—Count—where are you, Count? (I was exactly opposite to the fair speaker) Oh, there you are—pray—do you carry a little pocket-glass of the true quality about you? But, of course you do—lend it me."

"I have not the glass you want, but I carry with me a mirror that reflects your features much more faithfully."

"How! I protest I do not understand you!"

"The mirror is here!" said I, laying my hand to my heart.

"'Gad, I must kiss the boy!" cried my uncle, starting up.

"I have sworn," said I, fixing my eyes upon the lady—"I have sworn never to be kissed even by women. You must pardon me, uncle."

"I declare," cried the Lady Hasselton, flirting her fan which was somewhat smaller than the screen that one puts into a great hall, in order to take off the discomfort of too large a room—"I declare, Count, there is a vast deal of orginality about you. But tell me, Sir William, where did your nephew acquire, at so early an age—(eleven you say he is)—such a fund of agreeable assurance?"

"Nay, madam, let the boy answer for himself."

"*Imprimis*, then," said I, playing with the ribbon of my cane—"*imprimis*, early study of the best authors—Congreve and Farquhar, Etherege and Rochester. Secondly, the con-

stant intercourse of company which gives one the spleen so over-poweringly that despair inspires one with boldness—to get rid of them. Thirdly, the personal example of Sir William Devereux; and, fourthly, the inspiration of hope."

"Hope, sir!" said the Lady Hasselton, covering her face with her fan, so as only to leave me a glimpse of the farthest patch upon her left cheek—"hope, sir?"

"Yes—the hope of being pleasing to you. Suffer me to add that the hope has now become certainty."

"Upon my word, Count—"

"Nay, you cannot deny it—if one can once succeed in impudence, one is irresistible."

"Sir William," cried Lady Hasselton, "you may give the Count your chariot of green and gold, and your four Flanders mares, and send his mother's maid with him. He shall not go with me."

"Cruel! and why?" said I.

"You are too"—the lady paused, and looked at me over her fan. She was really very handsome—"you are too *old*, Count. You *must* be more than nine."

"Pardon me," said I, "I *am* nine—a very mystical number nine is too, and represents the muses, who, you know, were always attendant upon Venus—or you, which is the same thing; so you can no more dispense with my company than you can with that of the Graces."

"Good morning, Sir William!" cried the Lady Hasselton, rising.

I offered to hand her to the door—with great difficulty, for her hoop was of the very newest enormity of circumference, I effected this object. "Well, Count!" said she, "I am glad to see you have brought so much learning from school; make the best use of it, while it lasts, for your memory will not furnish you with a single simile out of the mythology by the end of next winter."

"That would be a pity!" said I, "for I intend having as many goddesses as the Heathens had, and I should like to worship them in a classical fashion."

"Oh! the young reprobate!" said the beauty, tapping me with her fan. "And pray what other deities besides Venus do I resemble?"

"All!" said I—"at least all the celestial ones!"

Though half way through the door, the beauty extricated her hoop, and drew back; "Bless me, the gods as well as the goddesses?"

"Certainly."

"You jest—tell me how."

"Nothing can be easier; you resemble Mercury, because of your thefts."

"Thefts!"

"Ay; stolen hearts, and" (added I, in a whisper) "glances—Jupiter, partly because of your lightning, which you lock up in the said glances—principally because all things are subservient to you—Neptune, because you are as changeable as the seas—Vulcan, because you live among the flames you excite—and Mars, because—"

"You are so destructive," cried my uncle.

"Exactly so; and because," added I—as I shut the door upon the beauty—"because, thanks to your hoop, you cover nine acres of ground."

"Od'sfish, Morton," said my uncle, "you surprise me at times—one while you are so reserved, at another so assured; to-day so brisk, to-morrow so gloomy. Why now, Lady Hasselton (she is very comely, eh! faith, but not comparable to her mother) told me, a week ago, that she gave you up in despair, that you were dull, past hoping for; and now, 'Gad, you had a life in you that Sid himself could not have surpassed. How comes it, sir, eh?"

"Why, uncle, you have explained the reason; it was exactly because she said I was dull that I was resolved to convict her in an untruth."

"Well, now, there is some sense in that, boy; always contradict ill report, by personal merit. But what think you of her ladyship? 'Gad, you know what old Bellair said of Emilia. 'Make much of her—she's one of the best of your acquaintance. I like her countenance and behavior. Well, she has a modesty not i' this age, a-dad she has.' Applicable enough—eh, boy!"

"'I know her value, sir, and esteem her accordingly,'" answered I, out of the same play, which by dint of long study, I had got by heart. "But, to confess the truth," added I, "I think you might have left out the passage about her modesty."

"There, now—you young chaps are so censorious—why 'sdeath, sir, you don't think the worse of her virture, because of her wit?"

"Humph!"

"Ah, boy—when you are my age you'll know that your demure cats are not the best; and that reminds me of a little story—shall I tell it you, child?"

"If it so please you, sir."

"Zauns—where's my snuff-box?—oh, here it is. Well, sir, you shall have the whole thing, from beginning to end. Sedley and I were one day conversing together about women. Sid was a very deep fellow in that game—no passion you know—no love on his own side—nothing of the sort—all done by rule and compass—knew women as well as dice, and calculated the exact moment when his snares would catch them, according to the principles of geometry. D—d clever fellow, faith—but a confounded rascal:—but let it go no farther—mum's the word!—must not slander the dead—and 'tis only my suspicion, you know, after all. Poor fellow—I don't think he was such a rascal; he gave a beggar an angel once,—well, boy, have a pinch?—Well, so I said to Sir Charles, 'I think you will lose the widow, after all—'Gad I do.' 'Upon what principle of science, Sir William?' said he. 'Why, faith, man, she is so modest, you see, and has such a pretty way of blushing.' 'Harkye, friend Devereux,' said Sir Charles, smoothing his collar, and mincing his words musically, as he was wont to do—'harkye, friend Devereux, I will give you the whole experience of my life in one maxim—I can answer for its being new, and I think it is profound—and that maxim is,—No faith, Morton—no, I can't tell it thee—it is villanous, and then it's so desperately against all the sex."

"My dear uncle, don't tantalize me so—pray tell it me—it shall be a secret."

"No, boy, no—it will corrupt thee—besides, it will do poor Sid's memory no good. But 'sdeath, it was a most wonderfully shrewd saying—i'faith, it was. But zounds—Morton—I forgot to tell you that I have had a letter from the Abbé to-day."

"Ha! and when does he return?"

"To-morrow, God willing!" said the knight with a sigh.

"So soon, or rather after so long an absence! Well, I am glad of it. I wish much to see him before I leave you."

"Indeed!" quoth my uncle—"you have an advantage over me, then!—But, od'sfish, Morton, how is it that you grew so friendly with the priest before his departure? He used to speak very suspiciously of thee formerly; and, when I last saw him, he lauded thee to the skies."

"Why, the clergy of his faith have a habit of defending the strong, and crushing the weak, I believe—that's all. He once thought I was dull enough to damn my fortune, and then he had some strange doubts for my soul—now he thinks me wise enough to become prosperous, and it is astonishing what a respect he has conceived for my principles."

"Ha! ha! ha!—you have a spice of your uncle's humor in you—and, 'Gad, you have no small knowledge of the world considering you have seen so little of it."

A hit at the Popish clergy was, in my good uncle's eyes, the exact acme of wit and wisdom. We are always clever with those who imagine we think as they do. To be shallow you must differ with people—to be profound you must agree with them. "Why, sir," answered the sage nephew, "you forget that I have seen more of the world than many of twice my age. Your house has been full of company ever since I have been in it, and you set me to making observations on what I saw before I was thirteen. And then, too, if one is reading books about real life, at the very time one is mixing in it, it is astonishing how naturally one remarks, and how well one remembers."

"Especially if one has a genius for it,—eh, boy! And then, too, you have read my play—turned Horace's Satires into a lampoon upon the boys at school—been regularly to assizes during the vacation—attended the county-balls, and been a most premature male coquette with the ladies. Od'sfish, boy!—it is quite curious to see how the young sparks of the present day get on with their love-making."

"Especially if one has a genius for it—eh, sir?" said I.

"Besides, too," said my uncle, ironically, "you have had the Abbé's instructions."

"Ay, and if the priests would communicate to their pupils their experience in frailty, as well as in virtue, how wise they would make us!"

"Od'sfish! Morton, you are quite oracular. How got you that fancy of priests?—by observation in life already?"

"No, uncle—by observation in plays, which

you tell me are the mirrors of life—you remember what Lee says—

> "'Tis thought
> That earth is more obliged to priests for bodies
> Than Heaven for souls.'"

And my uncle laughed, and called me a smart fellow.

CHAPTER XII.

The Abbé's return—a Sword, and a Soliloquy.

THE next evening when I was sitting alone in my room, the Abbé Montreuil suddenly entered. "Ah, is it you? welcome!"—cried I. The priest held out his arms, and embraced me in the most paternal manner.

"It *is* your friend," said he, "returned at last to bless and congratulate you. Behold my success in your service," and the Abbé produced a long leather case, richly inlaid with gold.

"Faith, Abbé," said I, "am I to understand that this is a present for your eldest pupil?"

"You are," said Montreuil, opening the case, and producing a sword; the light fell upon the hilt, and I drew back, dazzled with its lustre; it was covered with stones, apparently of the most costly value. Attached to the hilt was a label of purple velvet, on which, in letters of gold, was inscribed, "To the son of Marshal Devereux, the soldier of France, and the friend of Louis XIV."

Before I recovered my surprise at this sight, the Abbé said—"It was from the King's own hand that I received this sword, and I have authority to inform you, that if ever you wield it in the service of France it will be accompanied by a post worthy of your name."

"The service of France!" I repeated; "why at present, that is the service of an enemy."

"An enemy only to a *part* of England!" said the Abbé emphatically; "perhaps I have overtures to you from other monarchs, and the friendship of the court of France may be synonymous with the friendship of the true sovereign of England."

There was no mistaking the purport of this speech, and even in the midst of my gratified vanity, I drew back alarmed. The Abbé noted the changed expression of my countenance, and artfully turned the subject to comments on the sword, on which I still gazed with a lover's ardor. Thence he veered to a description of the grace and greatness of the royal donor—he dwelt at length upon the flattering terms in which Louis had spoken of my father, and had inquired concerning myself; he enumerated all the hopes that the illustrious house, into which my father had first married, expressed for a speedy introduction to his son; he lingered with an eloquence more savoring of the court than of the cloister, on the dazzling circle which surrounded the French throne; and when my vanity, my curiosity, my love of pleasure, my ambition, all that are most susceptible in young minds, were fully aroused, he suddenly ceased, and wished me a good night.

"Stay," said I; and looking at him more attentively than I had hitherto done, I perceived a change in his external appearance, which somewhat startled and surprised me. Montreuil had always hitherto been remarkably plain in his dress; but he was now richly attired, and by his side hung a rapier, which had never adorned it before. Something in his aspect seemed to suit the alteration in his garb: and whether it was that long absence had effaced enough of the familiarity of his features, to allow me to be more alive than formerly to the real impression they were calculated to produce, or whether a commune with kings and nobles had of late dignified their old expression, as power was said to have clothed the soldier-mien of Cromwell with a monarch's bearing—I do not affect to decide; but I thought that, in his high brow and Roman features, the compression of his lip, and his calm but haughty air, there was a nobleness, which I acknowledged for the first time. "Stay, my father," said I, surveying him, "and tell me, if there be no irreverence in the question, whether brocade and a sword are compatible with the laws of the Order of Jesus?"

"Policy, Morton," answered Montreuil, "often dispenses with custom; and the declarations of the Institude provide, with their usual wisdom, for worldly and temporary occasions. Even while the constitution ordains us to discard habits repugnant to our professions of poverty, the following exception is made: 'Si in occurrenti aliquâ occasione, vel necessitate, quis vestibus melioribus, honestis tamen, indueretur.'" *

* "But should there chance any occasion or neces-

"There is now, then, some occasion for a more glittering display than ordinary?" said I.

"There is, my pupil," answered Montreuil; "and whenever you embrace the offer of my friendship made to you more than two years ago,—whenever, too, your ambition points to a lofty and sublime career,—whenever, to make and unmake kings,—and, in the noblest sphere to execute the will of God,—indemnifies you for a sacrifice of petty wishes and momentary passions, I will confide to you schemes worthy of your ancestors and yourself."

With this the priest departed. Left to myself, I revolved his hints, and marvelled at the power he seemed to possess. "Closeted with kings," said I, soliloquizing,—"bearing their presents through armed men and military espionage,—speaking of empires and their overthrow, as of ordinary objects of ambition—and he himself a low-born and undignified priest, of a poor though a wise order—well, there is more in this than I can fathom; but I will hesitate before I embark in his dangerous and concealed intrigues—above all, I will look well ere I hazard my safe heritage of these broad lands in the service of that House which is reported to be ungrateful, and which is certainly exiled."

After this prudent and notable resolution, I took up the sword—re-examined it—kissed the hilt once and the blade twice—put it under my pillow—sent for my valet—undrest—went to bed—fell asleep—and dreamt that I was teaching the Maréchal de Villars the thrust *en seconde.*

But Fate, that arch-gossip, who, like her prototypes on earth, settles all our affairs for us without our knowledge of the matter, had decreed that my friendship with the Abbé Montreuil should be of very short continuance, and that my adventures on earth should flow through a different channel than, in all probability, they would have done under his spiritual direction.

CHAPTER XIII.

A mysterious Letter—a Duel—the Departure of one of the Family.

THE next morning I communicated to the Abbé my intention of proceeding to London. He received it with favor. "I myself," said he, "shall soon meet you there;—my office in your family has expired, and your mother, after so long an absence, will perhaps readily dispense with my spiritual advice to her. But time presses—since you depart so soon, give me an audience to-night in your apartment. Perhaps our conversation may be of moment."

I agreed—the hour was fixed, and I left the Abbé to join my uncle and his guests. While I was employing, among them, my time and genius with equal dignity and profit, one of the servants informed me that a man at the gate wished to see me—and alone.

Somewhat surprised, I followed the servant out of the room into the great hall, and desired him to bid the stranger attend me there. In a few minutes, a small, dark man, dressed between gentility and meanness, made his appearance. He greeted me with great respect, and presented a letter, which, he said, he was charged to deliver into my own hands, "with," he added in a low tone, "a special desire that none should, till I had carefully read it, be made acquainted with its contents." I was not a little startled by this request; and, withdrawing to one of the windows, broke the seal. A letter, inclosed in the envelope, in the Abbé's own hand-writing, was the first thing that met my eyes. At that instant the Abbé himself rushed into the hall. He cast one hasty look at the messenger, whose countenance evinced something of surprise and consternation at beholding him; and, hastening up to me, grasped my hand vehemently, and, while his eye dwelt upon the letter I held, cried, "Do not read it—not a word—not a word, there is poison in it!" And, so saying, he snatched desperately at the letter. I detained it from him with one hand, and pushing him aside with the other, said—

"Pardon me, Father—directly I have read it you shall have that pleasure—not till then;" and, as I said this, my eye falling upon the lettter, discovered my own name written in two places—my suspicions were aroused. I raised my eyes to the spot where the messenger had stood, with the view of addressing some question to him respecting his employer, when, to my surprise, I perceived he was already gone; I had no time, however, to follow him.

"Boy," said the Abbé, gasping for breath, and still seizing me with his lean bony hand,

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sity, one may wear better, though still decorous garments."

—"boy, give me that letter instantly. I charge you not to disobey me."

"You forget yourself, sir," said I, endeavoring to shake him off, "you forget yourself: there is no longer between us the distinction of pupil and teacher; and if you have not yet learnt the respect due to my station, suffer me to tell you that it is time you should."

"Give me the letter, I beseech you," said Montreuil, changing his voice from anger to supplication; "I ask your pardon for my violence; the letter does not concern you, but me; there is a secret in those lines, which you see are in my hand-writing, that implicates my personal safety. Give it me, my dear, dear son—your own honor, if not your affection for me, demands that you should."

I was staggered. His violence had confirmed my suspicions, but his gentleness weakened them. "Besides," thought I, "the handwriting *is his*, and even if my life depended upon reading the letter of another, I do not think my honor would suffer me to do so against his consent." A thought struck me—

"Will you swear," said I, "that this letter does not concern me?"

"Solemnly," answered the Abbé, raising his eyes.

"Will you swear that I am not even mentioned in it?"

"Upon peril of my soul, I will."

"Liar — traitor — perjured blasphemer!" cried I, in an inexpressible rage, "look here, and here!" and I pointed out to the priest various lines in which my name legibly and frequently occurred. A change came over Montreuil's face; he released my arm and staggered back against the wainscot; but recovering his composure instantaneously, he said, "I forgot, my son, I forgot—your name is mentioned, it is true, but with honorable eulogy, that is all."

"Bravo, honest Father?" cried I, losing my fury in admiring surprise at his address—"bravo! However, if that be all, you can have no objection to allow me to read the lines in which my name occurs; your benevolence cannot refuse me such a gratification as the sight of your written panegyric!"

"Count Devereux," said the Abbé, sternly, while his dark face worked with suppressed passion, "this is trifling with me, and I warn you not to push my patience too far. I *will* have that letter, or—" he ceased abruptly, and touched the hilt of his sword.

"Dare you threaten me?" I said, and the natural fierceness of my own disposition, deepened by vague and strong suspicions of some treachery designed against me, spoke in the tones of my voice.

"Dare I!" repeated Montreuil, sinking and sharpening his voice into a sort of inward screech. "Dare I!—ay, were your whole tribe arrayed against me. Give me the letter, or you will find me now and for ever your most deadly foe; deadly—ay—deadly, deadly!" and he shook his clenched hand at me, with an expression of countenance so malignant and menacing that I drew back involuntarily, and laid my hand on my sword.

The action seemed to give Montreuil a signal for which he had hitherto waited. "Draw then," he said through his teeth and unsheathed his rapier.

Though surprised at his determination, I was not backward in meeting it. Thrusting the letter in my bosom, I drew my sword in time to parry a rapid and fierce thrust. I had expected easily to master Montreuil, for I had some skill at my weapon;—I was deceived—I found him far more adroit than myself in the art of offence; and perhaps it would have fared ill for the hero of this narrative had Montreuil deemed it wise to direct against my life all the science he possessed. But the moment our swords crossed, the constitutional coolness of the man, which rage or fear had for a brief time banished, returned at once, and he probably saw that it would be as dangerous to him to take away the life of his pupil, as to forfeit the paper for which he fought. He, therefore, appeared to bend all his efforts towards disarming me. Whether or not he would have affected this it is hard to say, for my blood was up, and any neglect of my antagonist, in attaining an object very dangerous, when engaged with a skilful and quick swordsman, might have sent him to the place from which the prayers of his brethren have (we are bound to believe) released so many thousands of souls. But, meanwhile, the servants, who at first thought the clashing of swords was the wanton sport of some young gallants as yet new to the honor of wearing them, grew alarmed by the continuance of the sound, and flocked hurriedly to the place of contest. At their intrusion, we mutually drew

back. Recovering my presence of mind (it was a possession I very easily lost at that time), I saw the unseemliness of fighting with my preceptor, and a priest. I therefore burst, though awkwardly enough, into a laugh, and, affecting to treat the affair as a friendly trial of skill between the Abbé and myself, resheathed my sword and dismissed the intruders, who, evidently disbelieving my version of the story, retreated slowly, and exchanging looks. Montreuil, who had scarcely seconded my attempt to gloss over our *rencontre*, now approached me.

"Count," he said with a collected and cool voice, "suffer me to request you to exchange three words with me, in a spot less liable than this to interruption."

"Follow me then!" said I—and I led the way to a part of the grounds which lay remote and sequestered from intrusion. I then turned round, and perceived that the Abbé had left his sword behind. "How is this?" I said, pointing to his unarmed side—"have you not come hither to renew our engagement?"

"No!" answered Montreuil, "I repent me of my sudden haste, and I have resolved to deny myself all further possibility of unseemly warfare. That letter, young man, I still demand from you; I demand it from your own sense of honor and of right—it was written by me—it was not intended for your eye—it contains secrets implicating the lives of others beside myself;—now—read it if you will."

"You are right, sir," said I, after a short pause; "there is the letter; never shall it be said of Morton Devereux that he hazarded his honor to secure his safety.—But the tie between us is broken now and for ever!"

So saying, I flung down the debated epistle, and strode away. I re-entered the great hall. I saw by one of the windows a sheet of paper—I picked it up, and perceived that it was the envelope in which the letter had been enclosed. It contained only these lines, addressed to me in French:

"A friend of the late Marshal Devereux encloses to his son a letter, the contents of which it is essential for his safety that he should know.

"C. D. B."

"Umph!" said I—"a very satisfactory intimation, considering that the son of the late Marshal Devereux is so very well assured that he shall not know one line of the contents of the said letter. But let me see after this messenger!" and I immediately hastened to institute inquiry respecting him. I found that he was already gone; on leaving the hall he had remounted his horse, and taken his departure. One servant, however, had seen him, as he passed the front court, address a few words to my valet, Desmarais, who happened to be loitering there. I summoned Desmarais and questioned him.

"The dirty fellow," said the Frenchman, pointing to his spattered stockings with a lachrymose air, "splashed me, by a prance of his horse, from head to foot, and while I was screaming for very anguish, he stopped and said, 'Tell the Count Devereux that I was unable to tarry, but that the letter requires no answer.'"

I consoled Desmarais for his misfortune, and hastened to my uncle with a determination to reveal to him all that had occurred. Sir William was in his dressing-room, and his gentleman was very busy in adorning his wig. I entreated him to dismiss the *coiffeur*, and then, without much preliminary detail, acquainted him with all that had passed between the Abbé and myself.

The knight seemed startled when I came to the story of the sword. "'Gad, Sir Count, what have you been doing?" said he; "know you not that this may be a very ticklish matter? The king of France is a very great man, to be sure—a very great man—and a very fine gentleman; but you will please to remember that we are at war with his Majesty, and I cannot guess how far the accepting such presents may be held treasonable."

And Sir William shook his head with a mournful significance. "Ah," cried he, at last (when I had concluded my whole story), with a complacent look, "I have not lived at court, and studied human nature, for nothing: and I will wager my best full-bottom to a nightcap, that the crafty old fox is as much a jacobite as he is a rogue! The letter would have proved it, sir—it would have proved it!"

"But what shall be done now?" said I; "will you suffer him to remain any longer in the house?"

"Why," replied the knight, suddenly recollecting his reverence to the fair sex, "he is your mother's guest, not mine; we must refer the matter to her. But zauns, sir, with all def-

erence to her ladyship, we cannot suffer our house to be a conspiracy-hatch as well as a popish chapel;—and to attempt your life too—the devil! Od'sfish, boy, I will go to the countess myself, if you will just let Nicholls finish my wig—never attend the ladies *en déshabille*—always, with them, take care of your person most, when you most want to display your mind;" and my uncle ringing a little silver bell on his dressing-table, the sound immediately brought Nicholls to his toilet.

Trusting the cause to the zeal of my uncle, whose hatred to the ecclesiastic would, I knew, be an efficacious adjunct to his diplomatic address, and not unwilling to avoid being myself the person to acquaint my mother with the suspected delinquency of her favorite, I hastened from the knight's apartment in search of Aubrey. He was not in the house. His attendants (for my uncle, with old-fashioned grandeur of respect, suitable to his great wealth and aristocratic temper, allotted to each of us a separate suite of servants as well as of apartments) believed he was in the park. Thither I repaired, and found him, at length, seated by an old tree, with a large book of a religious cast before him, on which his eyes were intently bent.

"I rejoice to have found thee, my gentle brother," said I, throwing myself on the green turf by his side: "in truth you have chosen a fitting and fair place for study."

"I have chosen," said Aubrey, "a place meet for the peculiar study I am engrossed in; for where can we better read of the power and benevolence of God than among the living testimonies of both. Beautiful!—how very beautiful—is this happy world; but I fear," added Aubrey, and the glow of his countenance died away,—"I fear that we enjoy it too much."

"We hold different interpretations of our creed then," said I, "for I esteem enjoyment the best proof of gratitude; nor do I think we can pay a more acceptable duty to the Father of all Goodness than by showing ourselves sensible of the favors he bestows upon us."

Aubrey shook his head gently, but replied not.

"Yes," resumed I, after a pause—"yes, it is indeed a glorious and fair world which we have for our inheritance. Look, how the sunlight sleeps yonder upon fields covered with golden corn, and seems, like the divine benevolence of which you spoke, to smile upon the luxuriance which its power created. This carpet at our feet, covered with flowers that breathe, sweet as good deeds, to Heaven—the stream that breaks through that distant copse, laughing in the light of noon, and sending its voice through the hill and woodland, like a messenger of glad tidings,—the green boughs over our head, vocal with a thousand songs, all inspirations of a joy too exquisite for silence,—the very leaves, which seem to dance and quiver with delight,—think you, Aubrey, that these are so sullen as not to return thanks for the happiness they imbibe with being;—what are those thanks but the incense of their joy? The flowers send it up to heaven in fragrance—the air and the wave in music. Shall the heart of man be the only part of His creation that shall dishonor His worship with lamentation and gloom? When the inspired writers call upon us to praise our Creator, do they not say to us,—'Be *joyful* in your God?'"

"How can we be joyful with the Judgment-Day ever before us?" said Aubrey—"how can we be joyful" (and here a dark shade crossed his countenance, and his lip trembled with emotion), "while the deadly passions of this world plead and rankle at the heart? Oh, none but they who have known the full blessedness of a commune with heaven can dream of the whole anguish and agony of the conscience, when it feels itself sullied by the mire and crushed by the load of earth!" Aubrey paused, and his words—his tone—his look—made upon me a powerful impression. I was about to answer, when, interrupting me, he said, "Let us talk not of these matters,—speak to me on more worldly topics."

"I sought you," said I, "that I might do so!" and I proceeded to detail to Aubrey as much of my private intercourse with the Abbé as I deemed necessary in order to warn him from too close a confidence in the wily ecclesiastic. Aubrey listened to me with earnest attention:—the affair of the letter—the gross falsehood of the priest in denying the mention of my name, in his epistle, evidently dismayed him. "But," said he, after a long silence—"but it is not for us, Morton—weak, ignorant, inexperienced as we are—to judge prematurely of our spiritual pastors. To them also is given a far greater license of conduct than to us—and ways enveloped in what to our eyes are

mystery and shade; nay, I know not whether it be much less impious to question the paths of God's chosen, than to scrutinize those of the Deity himself."

"Aubrey, Aubrey, this is childish!" said I, somewhat moved to anger. "Mystery is always the trick of imposture: God's chosen should be distinguished from their flock only by superior virtue, and not by a superior privilege in deceit."

"But," said Aubrey, pointing to a passage in the book before him, "see what a preacher of the word has said!"—and Aubrey recited one of the most dangerous maxims in priestcraft, as reverently as if he were quoting from the Scripture itself. "'The nakedness of truth should never be too openly exposed to the eyes of the vulgar. It was wisely feigned, by the ancients, that Truth did lie concealed in a well!'"

"Yes," said I, with enthusiasm, "but that well is like the holy stream at Dodona, which has the gift of enlightening those who seek it, and the power of illumining every torch which touches the surface of its water!"

Whatever answer Aubrey might have made was interrupted by my uncle, who appeared approaching towards us with unusual satisfaction depicted on his comely countenance.

"Well, boys, well," said he, when he came within hearing—"a holyday for you! Od's-fish,—and a holier day than my old house has known since its former proprietor, Sir Hugo, of valorous memory, demolished the nunnery, of which some remains yet stand on yonder eminence. Morton, my man of might, the thing is done—the court is purified—the wicked one is departed. Look here, and be as happy as I am at our release;" and he threw me a note in Montreuil's writing—

To Sir William Devereux, Kt.

"My Honored Friend,

"In consequence of a dispute between your eldest nephew, Count Morton Devereux, and myself, in which he desired me to remember, not only that our former relationship of tutor and pupil was at an end, but that friendship for his person was incompatible with the respect due to his superior station, I can neither so far degrade the dignity of letters, nor, above all, so meanly debase the sanctity of my divine profession, as any longer to remain beneath your hospitable roof,—a guest not only unwelcome to, but insulted by, your relation and apparent heir. Suffer me to offer you my gratitude for the favors you have hitherto bestowed on me, and to bid you farewell for ever.

"I have the honor to be,
"With the most profound respect, etc.
"Julian Montreuil."

"Well, sir, what say you?" cried my uncle, stamping his cane firmly on the ground, when I had finished reading the letter, and had transmitted it to Aubrey.

"That the good Abbé has displayed his usual skill in composition. And my mother? Is she imbued with our opinion of his priestship?"

"Not exactly, I fear. However, Heaven bless her, she is too soft to say 'nay.' But those Jesuits are so smooth-tongued to women. 'Gad, they threaten damnation with such an irresistible air, that they are as much like William the Conqueror as Edward the Confessor. Ha! master Aubrey, have you become amorous of the old jacobite, that you sigh over his crabbed writing, as if it were a *billet-doux?*"

"There seems a great deal of feeling in what he says, sir," said Aubrey, returning the letter to my uncle.

"Feeling!" cried the knight; "ay, the reverend gentry always have a marvellously tender feeling for their own interest—eh, Morton?"

"Right, dear sir," said I, wishing to change a subject which I knew might hurt Aubrey; "but should we not join yon party of dames and damsels? I see they are about to make a water excursion."

"'Sdeath, sir, with all my heart," cried the good-natured knight: "I love to see the dear creatures amuse themselves; for, to tell you the truth, Morton," said he, sinking his voice into a knowing whisper, "the best thing to keep them from playing the devil is to encourage them in playing the fool!" and, laughing heartily at the jest he had purloined from one of his favorite writers, Sir William led the way to the water-party.

CHAPTER XIV.

Being a Chapter of Trifles.

The Abbé disappeared! It is astonishing how well everybody bore his departure. My mother scarcely spoke on the subject: but,

along the irrefragable smoothness of her temperament, all things glided without resistance to their course, or trace where they had been. Gerald, who, occupied solely in rural sports or rustic loves, seldom mingled in the festivities of the house, was equally silent on the subject. Aubrey looked grieved for a day or two; but his countenance soon settled into its customary and grave softness; and, in less than a week, so little was the Abbé spoken of or missed that you would scarcely have imagined Julian Montreuil had ever passed the threshold of our gate. The oblivion of one buried is nothing to the oblivion of one disgraced.

Meanwhile, I pressed for my departure; and, at length, the day was finally fixed. Ever since that conversation with Lady Hasselton, which has been set before the reader, that lady had lingered and lingered—though the house was growing empty, and London, in all seasons, was, according to her, better than the country in any—until the Count Devereux, with that amiable modesty which so especially characterized him, began to suspect that the Lady Hasselton lingered on his account. This emboldened that bashful personage to press in earnest for the fourth seat in the beauty's carriage, which, we have seen in the conversation before mentioned, had been previously offered to him in jest. After a great affectation of horror at the proposal, the Lady Hasselton yielded. She had always, she said, been dotingly fond of children, and it was certainly very shocking to send such a chit as the little Count to London by himself.

My uncle was charmed with the arrangement. The beauty was a peculiar favorite of his, and, in fact, he was sometimes pleased to hint that he had private reasons for love towards her mother's daughter. Of the truth of this insinuation I am, however, more than somewhat suspicious, and believe it was only a little *ruse* of the good knight, in order to excuse the vent of those kindly affections with which (while the heartless tone of the company his youth had frequented made him ashamed to own it) his breast overflowed. There was in Lady Hasselton's familiarity—her ease of manner—a certain good-nature mingled with her affectation, and a gaiety of spirit, which never flagged—something greatly calculated to win favor with a man of my uncle's temper.

An old gentleman who filled in her family the office of "the *chevalier*" in a French one; viz., who told stories, not too long, and did not challenge you for interrupting them—who had a good air, and unexceptionable pedigree—a turn for wit, literature, note-writing, and the management of lap-dogs—who could attend *Madame* to auctions, plays, court, and the puppet-show—who had a right to the best company, but would, on a signal, give up his seat to any one the pretty *capricieuse* whom he served might select from the worst—in short, a very useful, charming personage, "vastly" liked by all, and "prodigiously" respected by none;—this gentleman, I say, by name Mr. Lovell, had attended her ladyship in her excursion to Devereux Court. Besides him there came also a widow lady, a distant relation, with one eye and a sharp tongue—the Lady Needleham, whom the beauty carried about with her as a sort of *gouvernante* or duenna. These excellent persons made my *compagnons de voyage*, and filled the remaining complements of the coach. To say truth, and to say nothing of my *tendresse* for the Lady Hasselton, I was very anxious to escape the ridicule of crawling up to town, like a green beetle, in my uncle's verdant chariot, with the four Flanders' mares trained not to exceed two miles an hour. And my Lady Hasselton's *private* railleries—for she was really well bred, and made no jest of my uncle's antiquities of taste, in his presence, at least—had considerably heightened my intuitive dislike to that mode of transporting myself to the metropolis. The day before my departure, Gerald, for the first time spoke of it.

Glancing towards the mirror, which gave in full contrast the magnificent beauty of his person, and the smaller proportions and plainer features of my own, he said, with a sneer, "Your appearance must create a wonderful sensation in town."

"No doubt of it," said I, taking his words literally, and arraying my laced cravat with the air of a *petit-maître*.

"What a wit the Count has!" whispered the Duchess of Lackland—who had not yet given up all hope of the elder brother.

"Wit," said the Lady Hasselton: "poor child, he is a perfect simpleton!"

CHAPTER XV.

The Mother and Son—Virtue should be the sovereign of the Feelings, not their Destroyer.

I TOOK the first opportunity to escape from the good company who were so divided in opinion as to my mental accomplishments, and repaired to my mother; for whom, despite of her evenness of disposition, verging towards insensibility, I felt a powerful and ineffaceable affection. Indeed, if purity of life, rectitude of intentions, and fervor of piety, can win love, none ever deserved it more than she. It was a pity that, with such admirable qualities, she had not more dilligently cultivated her affections. The seed was not wanting; but it had been neglected. Originally intended for the veil, she had been taught, early in life, that much feeling was synonymous with much sin; and she had so long and so carefully repressed in her heart every attempt of the forbidden fruit to put forth a single blossom, that the soil seemed at last to have become incapable of bearing it. If, in one corner of this barren, but sacred, spot, some green and tender verdure of affection did exist, it was, with a partial and petty reserve for my twin-brother, kept exclusive, and consecrated to Aubrey. His congenial habits of pious silence and rigid devotion—his softness of temper—his utter freedom from all boyish excesses, joined to his almost angelic beauty—a quality which, in no female heart, is ever without its value—were exactly calculated to attract her sympathy, and work themselves into her love. Gerald was also regular in his habits, attentive to devotion, and had, from an early period, been high in the favor of her spiritual director. Gerald, too, if he had not the delicate and dreamlike beauty of Aubrey, possessed attractions of more masculine and decided order; and for Gerald, therefore, the Countess gave the little of love that she could spare from Aubrey. To me she manifested the most utter indifference. My difficult and fastidious temper—my sarcastic turn of mind—my violent and headstrong passions—my daring, reckless, and, when roused, almost ferocious nature—all, especially, revolted the even and polished and quiescent character of my maternal parent. The little extravagances of my childhood seemed to her pure and inexperienced mind, the crimes of a heart naturally distorted and evil; my jesting vein, which, though it never, even in the wantonness of youth, attacked the substances of good, seldom respected its semblances and its forms, she considered as the effusions of malignity; and even the bursts of love, kindness, and benevolence, which were by no means unfrequent in my wild and motley character, were so foreign to her stillness of temperament that they only revolted her by their violence, instead of affecting her by their warmth.

Nor did she like me the better for the mutual understanding between my uncle and myself. On the contrary, shocked by the idle and gay turn of the knight's conversation, the frivolities of his mind, and his heretical disregard for the forms of the religious sect which she so zealously espoused, she was utterly insensible to the points which redeemed and ennobled his sterling and generous character—utterly obtuse to his warmth of heart—his overflowing kindness of disposition—his charity—his high honor—his justice of principle, that nothing save benevolence could warp—and the shrewd penetrating sense, which, though often clouded by foibles and humorous eccentricity, still made the stratum of his intellectual composition. Nevertheless, despite her prepossessions against us both, there was in her temper something so gentle, meek, and unupbraiding, that even the sense of injustice lost its sting, and one could not help loving the softness of her character, while one was most chilled by its frigidity. Anger, hope, fear, the faintest breath or sign of passion, never seemed to stir the breezeless languor of her feelings; and quiet was so inseparable from her image that I have almost thought, like that people described by Herodotus, her very sleep could never be disturbed by dreams.

Yes! how fondly, how tenderly I loved her! What tears—secret, but deep—bitter, but unreproaching—have I retired to shed, when I caught her cold and unaffectionate glance. How (unnoticed and uncared for) have I watched, and prayed, and wept, without her door, when a transitory sickness or suffering detained her within; and how, when stretched myself upon the feverish bed, to which my early weakness of frame often condemned me, how have I counted the moments to her punctilious and brief visit, and started as I caught her footstep, and felt my heart leap within me as she approached; and then, as I heard her cold tone,

and looked upon her unmoved face, how bitterly have I turned away with all that repressed and crushed affection which was construed into sullenness or disrespect. O mighty and enduring force of early associations, that almost seems, in its unconquerable strength, to partake of an innate prepossession, that binds the son to the mother, who concealed him in her womb, and purchased life for him with the travail of death !—fountain of filial love, which coldness cannot freeze, nor injustice embitter, nor pride divert into fresh channels, nor time, and the hot suns of our toiling manhood, exhaust—even at this moment, how livingly do you gush upon my heart, and water with your divine waves the memories that yet flourish amidst the sterility of years !

I approached the apartments appropriated to my mother—I knocked at her door; one of her women admitted me, the Countess was sitting on a high-backed chair, curiously adorned with tapestry. Her feet, which were remarkable for their beauty, were upon a velvet cushion; three handmaids stood round her, and she herself was busily employed in a piece of delicate embroidery, an art in which she eminently excelled.

"The Count—madam !" said the woman who had admitted me, placing a chair beside my mother, and then retiring to join her sister maidens.

"Good day to you, my son," said the Countess, lifting her eyes for a moment, and then dropping them again upon her work.

"I have come to seek you, dearest mother, as I know not, if, among the crowd of guests and amusements which surround us, I shall enjoy another opportuuity of having a private conversation with you—will it please you to dismiss your women ?"

My mother again lifted up her eyes—"And why, my son ?—surely there *can* be nothing between us which requires their absence; what is your reason !"

"I leave you to-morrow, madam; is it strange that a son should wish to see his mother alone before his departure ?"

"By no means, Morton; but your absence will not be very long, will it ?"

"Forgive my importunity, dear mother—but *will* you dismiss your attendants ?"

"If you wish it, certainly; but I dislike feeling alone, especially in these large rooms; nor do I think our being unattended quite consistent with our rank; however, I never contradict you, my son," and the Countess directed her women to wait in the anteroom.

"Well, Morton, what is your wish ?"

"Only to bid you farewell, and to ask if London contains nothing which you will commission me to obtain for you !"

The Countess again rasied her eyes from her work.—"I am greatly obliged to you, my dear son; this is a very delicate attention on your part.—I am informed that stomachers are worn a thought less pointed than they were. I care not, you well know, for such vanities; but respect for the memory of your illustrious father renders me desirous to retain a seemly appearance to the world, and my women shall give you written instructions thereon to Madame Tourville—she lives in St. James's Street, and is the only person to be employed in these matters. She is a woman who has known misfortune, and appreciates the sorrowful and subdued tastes of those whom an exalted station has not preserved from like afflictions.—So, you go to-morrow—will you get me the scissors, they are on the ivory table, yonder.—When do you return ?"

"Perhaps never !" said I, abruptly.

"Never, Morton; how singular—why ?"

"I may join the army—and be killed."

"I hope not.—Dear, how cold it is—will you shut the window ?—pray forgive my troubling you, but you *would* send away the women.—Join the army, you say ?—it is a very dangerous profession—your poor father might be alive now but for having embraced it; nevertheless, in a righteous cause, under the Lord of Hosts, there is great glory to be obtained beneath its banners. Alas, however, for its private evils ! alas, for the orphan and the widow !—You will be sure, my dear son, to give the note to Madam Tourville herself ? her assistants have not her knowledge of my misfortunes, nor indeed of my exact proportions; and at my age, and in my desolate state, I would fain be decorous in these things—and that reminds me of dinner. Have you aught else to say, Morton ?"

"Yes !" said I, suppressing my emotions—"yes, mother ! do bestow on me one warm wish, one kind word, before we part—see—I kneel for your blessing—will you not give it me ?"

"Bless you, my child—bless you! look you now—I have dropt my needle!"

I rose hastily — bowed profoundly — (my mother returned the courtesy with the grace peculiar to herself)—and withdrew. I hurried into the great drawing-room — found Lady Needleham alone—rushed out in despair—encountered the Lady Hasselton, and coquetted with her the rest of the evening. Vain hope! to forget one's real feelings by pretending those one never felt!

The next morning, then, after suitable adieux to all (Gerald excepted) whom I left behind—after some tears too from my uncle, which, had it not been for the presence of the Lady Hasselton, I could have returned with interest—and after a long caress to his dog Ponto, which now, in parting with that dear old man, seemed to me as dog never seemed before, I hurried into the Beauty's carriage, bade farewell for ever to the Rubicon of Life, and commenced my career of manhood and citizenship by learning under the tui ion of the prettiest coquette of her time, the dignified duties of a Court Gallant, and a Town Beau.

BOOK SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

The Hero in London—Pleasure is often the shortest, as it is the earliest road to Wisdom, and we may say of the World what Zeal-of-the-Land-Busy says of the Pig-Booth, "We escape so much of the other vanities by our early entering."

It had, when I first went to town, just become the fashion for young men of fortune to keep house, and to give their bachelor establishments the importance hitherto reserved for the household of a Benedict.

Let the reader figure to himself a suite of apartments magnificently furnished, in the vicinity of the court. An ante-room is crowded with divers persons, all messengers in the various negotiations of pleasure. There, a French valet—that inestimable valet, Jean Desmarais—sitting over a small fire, was watching the operations of a coffee-pot, and conversing, in a mutilated attempt at the language of our nation, though with the enviable fluency of his own, with the various loiterers who were beguiling the hours they were obliged to wait for an audience of the master himself, by laughing at the master's Gallic representative. There stood a tailor with his books of patterns just imported from Paris—that modern Prometheus, who makes man what he is! Next to him a tall gaunt fellow, in a coat covered with tarnished lace, a night-cap wig, and a large whip in his hands, comes to vouch for the pedigree and excellence of the three horses he intends to dispose of, out of pure love and amity for the buyer. By the window stood a thin starveling poet, who, like the grammarian of Cos, might have put lead in his pockets to prevent being blown away, had he not, with a more paternal precaution, put so much in his works that he had left none to spare. Excellent trick of the times, when ten guineas can purchase every virtue under the sun, and when an author thinks to vindicate the sins of his book by proving the admirable qualities of the paragon to whom it is dedicated.* There, with an air of supercilious contempt, upon his smooth cheeks, a page, in purple and silver, sat upon the table, swinging his legs to and fro, and big with all the reflected importance of a *billet-doux*. There stood the pert haberdasher, with his box of silver-fringed gloves, and lace which Diana might have worn. At that time there was indeed no enemy to female chastity like the former article of man-millinery—the delicate whiteness of the glove, the starry splendor of the fringe, were irresistible, and the fair Adorna, in poor Lee's tragedy of Cæsar Borgia, is far from the only lady who has been killed by a pair of gloves.

Next to the haberdasher, dingy and dull of aspect, a book-hunter bent beneath the load of old works gathered from stall and shed, and about to be re-sold according to the price exacted from all literary gallants, who affect to unite the fine gentleman with the profound scholar. A little girl, whose brazen face and voluble tongue, betrayed the growth of her intellectual faculties, leant against the wainscot, and repeated, in the anteroom, the tart repartees which her mistress (the most celebrated actress of the day) uttered on the stage; while a stout, sturdy, bull-headed gentleman, in a gray surtout and a black wig, mingled with the various voices of the motley group the gentle phrases of Hockley in the Hole, from which place of polite merriment he came charged with a message of invitation. While such were the inmates of the anteroom, what picture shall we draw of the *salon* and its occupant?

A table was covered with books, a couple of fencing foils, a woman's mask, and a profusion

* Thank Heaven, for the honor of literature, *nous avons change tout cela!*—Ed.

of letters; a scarlet cloak, richly laced, hung over, trailing on the ground. Upon a slab of marble lay a hat, looped with diamonds, a sword, and a lady's lute. Extended upon a sofa, loosely robed in a dressing gown of black velvet, his shirt collar unbottoned, his stockings ungartered, his own hair (undressed and released for a brief interval from the false locks universally worn) waving from his forehead in short yet dishevelled curls, his whole appearance stamped with the morning negligence which usually follows midnight dissipation, lay a young man of about nineteen years. His features were neither handsome nor ill-favored, and his stature was small, slight, and somewhat insignificant, but not, perhaps, ill-formed either for active enterprise or for muscular effort. Such, reader, is the picture of the young prodigal who occupied the apartments I have described, and such (though somewhat flattered by partiality) is a portrait of Morton Devereux, six months after his arrival in town.

The door was suddenly thrown open with that unhesitating rudeness by which our friends think it necessary to signify the extent of their familiarity; and a young man of about eight-and-twenty, richly dressed, and of a countenance in which a dissipated nonchalance and an aristocratic hauteur seemed to struggle for mastery, abruptly entered.

"What! ho, my noble royster," cried he, flinging himself upon a chair—"still suffering from St. John's Burgundy! Fie, fie, upon your apprenticeship!—why, before I had served half your time, I could take my three bottles as easily as the sea took the good ship 'Revolution,'—swallow them down at a gulp, and never show the least sign of them the next morning!"

"I readily believe you, most magnanimous Tarleton. Providence gives to each of its creatures different favors—to one wit—to the other a capacity for drinking. A thousand pities that they are never united!"

"So bitter, Count!—ah, what will ever cure you of scarcasm?"

"A wise man by conversion, or fools by satiety."

"Well, I dare say that is witty enough, but I never admire fine things of a morning. I like letting my faculties live till night in a deshabille—let us talk easily and sillily of the affairs of the day. *Imprimis*, will you stroll to the New Exchange?—there is a black eye there that measures out ribbons, and my green ones long to flirt with it."

"With all my heart—and in return you shall accompany me to Master Powell's puppet-show."

"You speak as wisely as Solomon himself in the puppet-show. I own that I love that sight; 'tis a pleasure to the littleness of human nature to see great things abased by mimicry—kings moved by bobbins, and the pomps of the earth personated by Punch."

"But how do you like sharing the mirth of the groundlings, the filthy plebeians, and letting them see how petty are those distinctions which you value so highly, by showing them how heartily you can laugh at such distinctions yourself. Allow, my superb Coriolanus, that one purchases pride by the loss of consistency."

"Ah, Devereux, you poison my enjoyment by the mere word 'plebeian!' Oh, what a beastly thing is a common person!—a shape of the trodden clay without any alloy—a compound of dirty clothes—bacon breaths, villainous smells, beggarly cowardice, and cattish ferocity.—Pah, Devereux! rub civet on the very thought!"

"Yet they will laugh to-day at the same things you will, and consequently there would be a most flattering congeniality between you. Emotion, whether of ridicule, anger, or sorrow—whether raised at a puppet-show, a funeral, or a battle—is your grandest of levellers. The man who would be always superior should be always apathetic."

"Oracular, as usual, Count,—but, hark!—the clock gives tongue. One, by the Lord!—will you not dress?"

And I rose and dressed. We passed through the anteroom, my attendant assistants in the art of wasting money, drew up in a row.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," said I, ('Gentlemen, indeed!' cried Tartleton,) "for keeping you so long. Mr. Snivelship, your waistcoats are exquisite—favor me by conversing with my valet on the width of the lace for my liveries—he has my instructions. Mr. Jockelton, your horses shall be tried to-morrow at one. Ay, Mr. Rymer, I beg you a thousand pardons—I beseech you to forgive the ignorance of my rascals in suffering a gentleman of your merit to remain for a moment unattended to.

I have read your ode—it is splendid—the ease of Horace, with the fire of Pindar—your Pegasus never touches the earth, and yet in his wildest excesses you curb him with equal grace and facility—I object, sir, only to your dedication—it is too flattering."

"By no means, my Lord Count, it fits you to a hair."

"Pardon me," interrupted I, "and allow me to transfer the honor to Lord Halifax—he loves men of merit—he loves also their dedications. I will mention it to him to-morrow—every thing you say of me will suit him exactly. You will oblige me with a copy of your poem directly it is printed, and suffer me to pay your bookseller for it now, and through your friendly mediation; adieu!"

"Oh, Count, this is too generous."

"A letter for me, my pretty page. Ah! tell her ladyship I shall wait upon her commands at Powell's—time will move with a tortoise speed till I kiss her hands. Mr. Fribbleden, your gloves would fit the giants at Guildhall—my valet will furnish you with my exact size—you will see to the legitimate breadth of the fringe. My little beauty, you are from Mrs. Bracegirdle—the play *shall* succeed—I have taken seven boxes—Mr. St. John promises his influence. Say, therefore, my Hebe, that the thing is certain, and let me kiss thee,—thou hast dew on thy lip already. Mr. Thumpem, you are a fine fellow, and deserve to be encouraged; I will see that the next time your head is broken it shall be broken fairly;—but I will not patronize the bear—consider that peremptory. What, Mr. Bookworm, again! I hope you have succeeded better this time—the old songs had an autumn fit upon them, and had lost the best part of their *leaves*—and Plato had mortgaged one half his republic, to pay, I suppose, the exorbitant sum you thought proper to set upon the other. As for Diogenes Laertius, and his philosophers—"

"Pish!" interrupted Tarleton; "are you going, by your theoretical treatises on philosophy, to make me learn the practical part of it, and prate upon learning while I am supporting myself with patience?"

"Pardon me! Mr. Bookworm—you will deposit your load, and visit me to-morrow at an earlier hour. And now, Tarleton, I am at your service."

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CHAPTER II.

Gay Scenes and Conversations:—the New Exchange and the Puppet Show:—The Actor, the Skeleton, and the Beauty.

"WELL, Tarleton," said I, looking round that mart of millinery and love-making, which, so celebrated in the reign of Charles II., still preserved the shadow of its old renown in that of Anne—"well, here we are upon the classical ground so often commemorated in the comedies which our chaste grandmothers thronged to see. Here we can make appointments, while we profess to buy gloves, and should our mistress tarry too long, beguile our impatience by a flirtation with her milliner. Is there not a breathing air of gaiety about the place?—does it not still smack of the Ethereges and Sedleys?"

"Right," said Tarleton, leaning over a counter and amorously eyeing the pretty coquette to whom it belonged—while, with the coxcombry then in fashion, he sprinkled the long curls that touched his shoulders with a fragrant shower from a bottle of jessamine water upon the counter—"right; saw you ever such an eye? Have you snuff of the true scent, my beauty—foh!—this is for the nostril of a Welsh parson—choleric and hot, my beauty—pulverized horse-radish—why, it would make a nose of the coldest constitution imaginable sneeze like a washed schoolboy on a Saturday night,—ah, this is better, my princess—there is some courtesy in this snuff—it flatters the brain like a poet's dedication. Right, Devereux, right, there *is* something infectious in the atmosphere; one catches good humor, as easily as if it were cold. Shall we stroll on?—*my* Clelia is on the other side of the Exchange.—You were speaking of the playwriters—what a pity that our Ethereges and Wycherleys should be so frank in their gallantry, that the prudish public already begins to look shy on them.—They have a world of wit!"

"Ay," said I; "and, as my good uncle would say, a world of knowledge of human nature, viz., of the worst part of it. But they are worse than merely licentious—they are positively villainous—pregnant with the most redemptionless *scoundrelism*,—cheating, lying, thieving, and fraud; their humor debauches the whole moral system—they are like the Sardinian herb—they make you laugh, it is

true—but they poison you in the act. But who comes here!"

"Oh, honest Coll!—Ah, Cibber, how goes it with you?"

The person thus addressed was a man of about the middle age—very grotesquely attired—and with a periwig preposterously long. His countenance (which, in its features, was rather comely) was stamped with an odd mixture of liveliness, impudence, and a coarse, yet not unjoyous spirit of reckless debauchery. He approached us with a saunter, and saluted Tarleton with an air servile enough, in spite of an affected familiarity.

"What think you," resumed my companion, "we were conversing upon?"

"Why, indeed, Mr. Tarleton," answered Cibber, bowing very low, "unless it were the exquisite fashion of your waistcoat, or your success with my Lady Duchess, I know not what to guess."

"Pooh, man," said Tarleton, haughtily, "none of your compliments;" and then added, in a milder tone, "No, Colley, we were abusing the immoralities that existed on the stage, until thou, by the light of thy virtuous example, didst undertake to reform it."

"Why," rejoined Cibber, with an air of mock sanctity, "Heaven be praised, I have pulled out some of the weeds from our theatrical parterre——"

"Hear you that, Count? Does he not look a pretty fellow for a censor?"

"Surely," said Cibber, "ever since Dicky Steele has set up for a saint, and assumed the methodistical twang, some hopes of conversion may be left even for such reprobates as myself. Where, may I ask, will Mr. Tarleton drink to-night?"

"Not with thee, Coll. The Saturnalia don't happen every day. Rid us now of thy company; but stop, I will do thee a pleasure—know you this gentleman?"

"I have not that extreme honor."

"Know a Count, then! Count Devereux, demean yourself by sometimes acknowledging Colley Cibber, a rare fellow at a song, a bottle, and a message to an actress; a lively rascal enough, but without the goodness to be loved, or the independence to be respected."

"Mr. Cibber," said I, rather hurt at Tarleton's speech, though the object of it seemed to hear this description with the most unruffled composure—"Mr. Cibber, I am happy, and proud of an introduction to the author of the 'Careless Husband.' Here is my address; oblige me with a visit at your leisure."

"How could you be so galling to the poor devil?" said I, when Cibber, with a profusion of bows and compliments, had left us to ourselves.

"Ah, hang him—a low fellow, who pins all his happiness to the skirts of the quality is proud of being despised, and that which would excruciate the vanity of others only flatters *his*. And now for my Clelia——."

After my companion had amused himself with a brief flirtation with a young lady, who affected a most edifying demureness, we left the Exchange, and repaired to the Puppet-show.

On entering the Piazza, in which, as I am writing for the next century, it may be necessary to say that Punch held his court, we saw a tall, thin fellow, loitering under the columns, and exhibiting a countenance of the most ludicrous discontent. There was an insolent arrogance about Tarleton's good-nature which always led him to consult the whim of the moment at the expense of every other consideration, especially if the whim referred to a member of the canaille whom my aristocratic friend esteemed as a base part of the exclusive and despotic property of gentlemen.

"Egad, Devereux," said he, "do you see that fellow? he has the audacity to affect spleen. Faith, I thought melancholy was the distinguishing patent of nobility—we will smoke him." And, advancing towards the man of gloom, Tarleton touched him with the end of his cane. The man started and turned round. "Pray, sirrah," said Tarleton coldly, "pray who the devil are you, that you presume to look discontented?"

"Why, sir," said the man, good-humoredly enough, "I have some right to be angry."

"I doubt it, my friend," said Tarleton. "What is your complaint? a rise in the price of tripe, or a drinking wife? those, I take it, are the sole misfortunes incidental to your condition."

"If that be the case," said I, observing a cloud on our new friend's brow, "shall we heal thy sufferings? Tell us thy complaints, and we will prescribe thee a silver specific; there is a sample of our skill."

"Thank you, humbly, gentlemen," said the

man, pocketing the money, and clearing his countenance; "and seriously, mine is an uncommonly hard case. I was, till within the last few weeks, the under-sexton of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, and my duty was that of ringing the bells for daily prayers: but a man of Belial came hitherwards, set up a puppet-show, and, timing the hours of his exhibition with a wicked sagacity, made the bell I rang for church serve as a summons to Punch,—so, gentlemen, that whenever your humble servant began to pull for the Lord, his perverted congregation began to flock to the devil; and, instead of being an instrument for saving souls, I was made the innocent means of destroying them. Oh, gentlemen, it was a shocking thing to tug away at the rope till the sweat ran down one, for four shillings a week; and to see all the time that one was thinning one's own congregation, and emptying one's own pockets!"

"It was indeed a lamentable dilemma; and what did you, Mr. Sexton?"

"Do, sir, why, I could not stifle my conscience, and I left my place. Ever since then, sir, I have stationed myself in the Piazza, to warn my poor, deluded fellow-creatures of their error, and to assure them that when the bell of St. Paul's rings, it rings for prayers, and not for puppet-shows—and, Lord help us, there it goes at this very moment; and look, look, gentlemen, how the wigs and hoods are crowding to the motion * instead of the minister."

"Ha! ha! ha!" cried Tarleton, "Mr. Powell is not the first man who has wrested things holy to serve a carnal purpose, and made use of church bells in order to ring money to the wide pouch of the church's enemies. Harkye, my friend, follow my advice, and turn preacher yourself; mount a cart opposite to the motion, and I'll wager a trifle that the crowd forsake the theatrical mountebank in favor of the religious one; for the more sacred the thing played upon, the more certain is the game."

"Body of me, gentlemen," cried the ex-sexton, "I'll follow your advice."

"Do so, man, and never presume to look doleful again; leave dulness to your superiors." †

And with this advice, and an additional compensation for his confidence, we left the innocent assistant of Mr. Powell, and marched into the puppet-show, by the sound of the very bells the perversion of which the good sexton had so pathetically lamented.

The first person I saw at the show, and indeed the express person I came to see, was the Lady Hasselton. Tarleton and myself separated for the present, and I repaired to the coquette: "Angels of grace!" said I, approaching; "and, by-the-by, before I proceed another word, observe, Lady Hasselton, how appropriate the exclamation is to *you!* Angels of *grace!* why you have moved all your patches!—one—two—three—six—eight—as I am a gentleman, from the left side of your cheek to the right! What is the reason of so sudden an emigration?"

"I have changed my politics,* Count, that is all, and have resolved to lose no time in proclaiming the change. But is it true that you are going to be married?"

"Married! Heaven forbid! which of my enemies spead so cruel a report?"

"Oh, the report is universal!" and the Lady Hasselton flirted her fan with a most flattering violence.

"It is false, nevertheless; I cannot afford to buy a wife at present, for, thanks to jointures, and pin-money, these things are all matter of commerce; and (see how closely civilized life resembles the savage!) the English, like the Tartar gentleman, obtains his wife only by purchase! But who is the bride?"

"The Duke of Newcastle's rich daughter, Lady Henrietta Pelham."

"What, Harley's object of ambition! † Faith, Madam, the report is not so cruel as I thought for!"

"Oh, you fop!—but is it not true?"

"By my honor, I fear not; my rivals are too numerous and too powerful. Look now, yonder! how they already flock around the illustrious heiress,—note those smiles and simpers. Is it not pretty to see those very fine gentlemen imitating bumpkins at a fair, and grinning their best *for a gold ring!* But you need not fear me, Lady Hasselton, my love cannot wander,

* An antiquated word in use for puppet-shows.

† See Spectator, No. 14, for a letter from this unfortunate under-sexton.

* Whig ladies patched on one side of the cheek, tories on the other.

† Lord Bolingbroke tells us that it was the main end of Harley's administration to marry his son to this lady. Thus is the fate of nations a bundle made up of a thousand little private schemes.

if it would. In the quaint thought of Sidney,* love having once flown to my heart, burnt its wings there, and cannot fly away."

"La, you now!" said the beauty; "I do not comprehend you exactly—your master of the graces does not teach you your compliments properly."

"Yes, he does, but in your presence I forget them; and now," I added, lowering my voice into the lowest of whispers, "now that you are assured of my fidelity, will you not learn at last to discredit rumors and trust to me?"

"I love you too well!" answered the Lady Hasselton in the same tone, and that answer gives an admirable idea of the affection of every coquette!—love and confidence with them are qualities that have a natural antipathy, and can never be united! Our *tête-à-tête* was at an end, the people round us became social, and conversation general.

"Betterton acts to-morrow night," cried the Lady Pratterly, "we must go!"

"We must go," cried the Lady Hasselton.

"We must go!" cried all.

And so passed the time till the puppet-show was over, and my attendance dispensed with.

It is a charming thing to be the lover of a lady of the mode! One so honored does with his hours as a miser with his guineas,—viz., nothing but count them!

CHAPTER III.

More Lions.

THE next night, after the theatre, Tarleton and I strolled into Wills's. Half-a-dozen wits were assembled. Heavens! how they talked! actors, actresses, poets, statesmen, philosophers, critics, divines, were all pulled to pieces with the most gratifying malice imaginable. We sat ourselves down, and while Tarleton amused himself with a dish of coffee and the "Flying Post," I listened very attentively to the conversation. Certainly if we would take every opportunity of getting a grain or two of knowledge, we should soon have a chest-full;—a man earned an excellent subsistence by asking every one who came out of a tobacconist's shop for a pinch of snuff, and retailing the mixture as soon as he had filled his box.*

While I was listening to a tall lusty gentleman, who was abusing Dogget, the actor, a well-dressed man entered, and immediately attracted the general observation. He was of a very flat, ill-favored countenance, but of a quick eye, and a genteel air; there was, however, something constrained and artificial in his address, and he appeared to be endeavoring to clothe a natural good humor with a certain primness which could never be made to fit it.

"Ha, Steele!" cried a gentleman in an orange-colored coat, who seemed, by a fashionable swagger of importance, desirous of giving the tone to the company—"Ha, Steele! whence come you? from the chapel or the tavern?" and the speaker winked round the room as if he wished us to participate in the pleasure of a good thing.

Mr. Steele drew up, seemingly a little affronted; but his good-nature conquering the affectation of personal sanctity, which, at the time I refer to, that excellent writer was pleased to assume, he contented himself with nodding to the speaker, and saying:—

"All the world knows, Colonel Cleland, that you are a wit, and therefore we take your fine sayings, as we take change from an honest tradesman,—rest perfectly satisfied with the coin we get, without paying any attention to it."

"Zounds, Cleland, you got the worst of it there," cried a gentleman in a flaxen wig. And Steele slid into a seat near my own.

Tarleton, who was sufficiently well educated to pretend to the character of a man of letters, hereupon thought it necessary to lay aside the "Flying Post," and to introduce me to my literary neighbor.

"Pray," said Colonel Cleland, taking snuff and swinging himself to and fro with an air of fashionable grace, "has any one seen the new paper?"

"What!" cried the gentleman in the flaxen wig, "what! the Tartler's successor,—the 'Spectator?'"

"The same," quoth the colonel.

"To be sure—who has not?" returned he

* In the Arcadia, that museum of oddities and beauties.

* Tatler.

of the flaxen ornament. "People say Congreve writes it."

"They are very much mistaken, then," cried a little square man with spectacles; "to my certain knowledge Swift is the author."

"Pooh!" said Cleland imperiously—"pooh! it is neither one nor the other; I, gentlemen, am in the secret—but—you take me, eh? One must not speak well of oneself—mum is the word."

"Then," asked Steele, quietly, "we are to suppose that you, Colonel, are the writer?"

"I never said so, Dicky; but the women will have it that I am," and the colonel smoothed down his cravat.

"Pray, Mr. Addison, what say you?" cried the gentleman in the flaxen wig, "are you for Congreve, Swift, or Colonel Cleland?" This was addressed to a gentleman of a grave, but rather prepossessing mien; who, with eyes fixed upon the ground, was very quietly, and to all appearance very inattentively, solacing himself with a pipe; without lifting his eyes, this personage, then eminent, afterwards rendered immortal, replied—

"Colonel Cleland must produce other witnesses to prove his claim to the authorship of the 'Spectator;' the women, we well know, are prejudiced in his favor."

"That's true enough, old friend," cried the colonel, looking askant at his orange-colored coat, "but faith, Addison, I wish you would set up a paper of the same sort, d'ye see; you're a nice judge of merit, and your sketches of character would do justice to your friends."

"If ever I do, colonel, I, or my coadjutors, will study at least to do justice to you." *

"Prithee, Steele," cried the stranger in spectacles, "prithee tell us thy thoughts on the subject: dost thou know the author of this droll periodical?"

"I saw him this morning," replied Steele, carelessly.

"Aha? and what said you to him?"

"I asked him his name."

"And what did he answer?" cried he of the flaxen wig, while all of us crowded round the speaker, with the curiosity every one felt in the authorship of a work then exciting the most universal and eager interest.

* This seems to corroborate the suspicion entertained of the identity of Colonel Cleland with the Will Honeycomb of the Spectator.

"He answered me solemnly," said Steele, "in the following words,

'Græci carent ablativo—Itali dativo—Ego nominativo.'" *

"Famous—capital!" cried the gentleman in spectacles; and then, touching Colonel Cleland, added, "what does it exactly mean?"

"Ignoramus!" said Cleland, disdainfully, "every *school-boy knows Virgil!*"

"Devereux," said Tarleton, yawning, "what a d—d delightful thing it is to hear so much wit—pity that the atmosphere is so fine that no lungs unaccustomed to it can endure it long. Let us recover ourselves by a walk."

"Willingly," said I; and we sauntered forth into the streets.

"Wills's is not what it was," said Tarleton; "'tis a pitiful ghost of its former self, and if they had not introduced cards, one would die of the vapors there."

"I know nothing so insipid," said I, "as that mock literary air which it is so much the fashion to assume. 'Tis but a wearisome relief to conversation to have interludes of songs about Strephon and Sylvia, recited with a lisp by a gentleman with fringed gloves and a languishing look."

"Fie on it," cried Tarleton, "let us seek for a fresher topic. Are you asked to Abigail Masham's to-night, or will you come to Dame de la Riviere Manley's?"

"Dame de la what?—in the name of long words who is she?"

"Oh! Learning made libidinous: one who reads Catullus and profits by it."

"Bah, no, we will not leave the gentle Abigail for her. I have promised to meet St. John, too, at the Mashams."

"As you like. We shall get some wine at Abigail's, which we should never do at the house of her cousin of Marlborough."

And, comforting himself with this belief, Tarleton peaceably accompanied me to that celebrated woman, who did the Tories such notable service, at the expense of being termed by the Whigs, one great want divided into two parts, viz.—a great want of every shilling belonging to other people, and a great want of every virtue that should have belonged to herself. As we mounted the staircase, a door to

* "The Greeks want an ablative—the Italians a dative—I a nominative."

the left (a private apartment) was opened, and I saw the favorite dismiss, with the most flattering air of respect, my old preceptor, the Abbe Montreuil. He received her attention as his due, and, descending the stairs, came full upon me. He drew back—changed neither hue nor muscle—bowed civilly enough, and disappeared. I had not much opportunity to muse over this circumstance, for St. John and Mr. Domville — excellent companions both—joined us; and the party being small, we had the unwonted felicity of talking, as well as bowing, to each other. It was impossible to think of any one else when St. John chose to exert himself; and so even the Abbe Montreuil glided out of my brain as St. John's wit glided into it. We were all of the same way of thinking on politics, and therefore were witty without being quarrelsome—a rare thing. The trusty Abigail told us stories of the good Queen, and we added *bons-mots* by way of corollary. Wine, too, wine that even Tarleton approved, lit up our intellects, and we spent altogether an evening such as gentlemen and Tories very seldom have the sense to enjoy.

O Apollo! I wonder whether Tories of the next century will be such clever, charming, well-informed fellows as we were!

CHAPTER IV.

An Intellectual Adventure.

A LITTLE affected by the vinous potations which had been so much an object of anticipation with my companion, Tarleton and I were strolling homeward when we perceived a remarkably tall man engaged in a contest with a couple of watchmen. Watchmen were in all cases the especial and natural enemies of the gallants in my young days; and no sooner did we see the unequal contest than, drawing our swords with that true English valor which makes all the quarrels of other people its own, we hastened to the relief of the weaker party.

"Gentlemen," said the elder watchman, drawing back, "this is no common brawl; we have been shamefully beaten by this here madman, and for no earthly cause."

"Who ever did beat a watchman for any earthly cause, you rascal?" cried the accused party, swinging his walking-cane over the complainant's head with a menacing air.

"Very true," cried Tarleton, coolly. "Seigneurs of the watch, you are both made and paid to be beaten; ergo—you have no right to complain. Release this worthy cavalier, and depart elsewhere to make night hideous with your voices."

"Come, come," quoth the younger Dogberry, who perceived a reinforcement approaching, "move on, good people, and let us do our duty."

"Which," interrupted the elder watchman, "consists in taking this hulking swaggerer to the watchhouse."

"Thou speakest wisely, man of peace," said Tarleton; "defend thyself;" and without adding another word, he ran the watchman through—not the body, but the coat; avoiding, with great dexterity, the corporeal substance of the attacked party, and yet approaching it so closely, as to give the guardian of the streets very reasonable ground for apprehension. No sooner did the watchman find the hilt strike against his breast, than he uttered a dismal cry, and fell upon the pavement as if he had been shot.

"Now for thee, varlet," cried Tarleton, brandishing his rapier before the eyes of the other watchman, "tremble at the sword of Gideon."

"O Lord, O Lord!" ejaculated the terrified comrade of the fallen man, dropping on his knees, "for Heaven's sake, sir, have a care."

"What argument canst thou allege, thou screech owl of the metropolis, that thou shouldst not share the same fate as thy brother owl?"

"Oh, sir!" cried the craven night-bird (a bit of a humorist in its way), "because I have a nest and seven little owlets at home, and t'other owl is only a bachelor."

"Thou art an impudent thing to jest at us," said Tarleton; "but thy wit has saved thee; rise."

At this moment two other watchmen came up.

"Gentlemen," said the tall stranger whom we had rescued, "we had better fly."

Tarleton cast at him a contemptuous look, and placed himself in a posture of offence.

"Hark ye," said I, "let us effect an honorable peace. Messieurs the watch, be it lawful

for you to carry off the slain, and for us to claim the prisoners."

But our new foes understood not a jest, and advanced upon us with a ferocity which might really have terminated in a serious engagement, had not the tall stranger thrust his bulky form in front of the approaching battalion, and cried out, with a loud voice, "Zounds, my good fellows, what's all this for? If you take us up, you will get broken heads to-night, and a few shillings perhaps to-morrow. If you leave us alone, you will have whole heads, and a guinea between you. Now, what say you?"

Well spoke Phædra against the dangers of eloquence (καλδι λιάν λογοι). The watchmen looked at each other. "Why really, sir," said one, "what you say alters the case very much; and if Dick here is not much hurt, I don't know what we may say to the offer."

So saying, they raised the fallen watchman, who, after three or four grunts, began slowly to recover himself.

"Are you dead, Dick?" said the owl with seven owlets.

"I think I am," answered the other, groaning.

"Are you able to drink a pot of ale, Dick?" cried the tall stranger.

"I think I am," reiterated the dead man, very lack-a-daisically. And this answer satisfying his comrades, the articles of peace were subscribed to.

Now, then, the tall stranger began searching his pockets with a most consequential air.

"'Gad, so!" said he at last; "not in my breeches pocket!—well, it must be in my waistcoat. No. Well, 'tis a strange thing—demme it is! Gentlemen, I have had the misfortune to leave my purse behind me, add to your other favors by lending me wherewithal to satisfy these honest men."

And Tarleton lent him the guinea. The watchmen now retired, and we were left alone with our portly ally.

Placing his hand to his heart, he made us half-a-dozen profound bows, returned us thanks for our assistance in some very courtly phrases, and requested us to allow him to make our acquaintance. We exchanged cards, and departed on our several ways.

"I have met that gentleman before," said Tarleton. "Let us see what name he pretends to. 'Fielding—Fielding;' ah, by the Lord, it is no less a person! it is the great Fielding himself."

"Is Mr. Fielding, then, as elevated in fame as in stature?"

"What, is it possible that you have not yet heard of Beau Fielding, who bared his bosom at the theatre in order to attract the admiring compassion of the female part of the audience?"

"What!" I cried, "the Duchess of Cleveland's Fielding?"

"The same; the best looking fellow of his day! A sketch of his history is in the 'Tatler,' under the name of 'Orlando the Fair.' He is terribly fallen as to fortune since the day when he drove about in a car like a sea-shell, with a dozen tall fellows, in the Austrian livery, black and yellow, running before and behind him. You know he claims relationship to the house of Hapsburg. As for the present, he writes poems, makes love, is still good-natured, humorous, and odd; is rather unhappily addicted to wine and borrowing, and rigidly keeps that oath of the Carthusians which never suffers them to carry any money about them."

"An acquaintance more likely to yield amusement than profit."

"Exactly so. He will favor you with a visit—to-morrow, perhaps, and you will remember his propensities."

"Ah? who ever forgets a warning that relates to his purse!"

"True!" said Tarleton, sighing. "Alas! my guinea, thou and I have parted company for ever! *vale, vale, inquit Iolas!*"

CHAPTER V.

The Beau in his Den, and a Philosopher discovered.

Mr. Fielding having twice favored me with visits, which found me from home, I thought it right to pay my respects to him; accordingly one morning I repaired to his abode. It was situated in a street which had been excessively the mode some thirty years back; and the house still exhibited a stately and somewhat ostentatious exterior. I observed a considerable cluster of infantine raggamuffins collected round the door, and no sooner did the portal open to my summons, than they pressed forward in a manner infinitely more zealous than respectful. A servant in the Austrian livery, with a broad belt round his middle, officiated

as porter. "Look, look!" cried one of the youthful gazers, "look at the Beau's *keeper!*" This imputation on his own respectability, and that of his master, the domestic seemed by no means to relish, for, muttering some maledictory menace, which I at first took to be German, but which I afterwards found to be Irish, he banged the door on the faces of the intrusive impertinents, and said, in an accent which suited very ill with his continental attire.

"And is it my master you're wanting, sir?"

"It is."

"And you would be after seeing him immadiately?"

"Rightly conjectured, my sagacious friend."

"Fait then, your honor, my master's in bed with a terrible fit of the megrims."

"Then you will favor me by giving this card to your master, and expressing my sorrow at his indisposition."

Upon this the orange-colored lackey, very quietly reading the address on the card, and spelling letter by letter in an audible mutter, rejoined—

"C—o—u (cou) n—t (unt) Count, D—e—v. Och, by my shoul, and it's Count Devereux after all? I'm thinking?"

"You think, with equal profundity and truth."

"You may well say that, your honor. Stip in a bit—I'll till my master—it is himself that will see you in a twinkling!"

"But you forget that your master is ill!" said I.

"Sorrow a bit for the matter o'that—my master is never ill to a jontleman."

And with this assurance "the Beau's keeper" ushered me up a splendid staircase into a large, dreary, faded apartment, and left me to amuse myself with the curiosities within, while he went to perform a cure upon his master's "megrims." The chamber, suiting with the house and the owner, looked like a place in the other world, set apart for the reception of the ghosts of departed furniture. The hangings were wan and colorless, the chairs and sofas were most spiritually unsubstantial,—the mirrors reflected all things in a sepulchral sea-green; even a huge picture of Mr. Fielding himself, placed over the chimney-piece, seemed like the apparition of a portrait, so dim, watery, and indistinct had it been rendered by neglect and damp. On a huge tomb-like table, in the middle of the room, lay two pencilled profiles of Mr. Fielding, a pawnbroker's ticket, a pair of ruffles, a very little muff, an immense broadsword, a Wycherley comb, a jackboot, and an old plumed hat;—to these were added a cracked pomatum-pot, containing ink, and a scrap of paper, ornamented with sundry paintings of hearts and torches, on which were scrawled several lines in a hand so large and round that I could not avoid seeing the first verse, though I turned away my eyes as quickly as possible—that verse, to the best of my memory, ran thus: "Say, lovely Lesbia, when thy swain." Upon the ground lay a box of patches, a periwig, and two or three well-thumbed books of songs. Such was the reception-room of Beau Fielding, one indifferently well calculated to exhibit the propensities of a man, half bully, half fribbel; a poet, a fop, a fighter, a beauty, a walking museum of all odd humors, and a living shadow of a past renown. "There are changes in wit as in fashion," said Sir William Temple, and he proceeds to instance a nobleman, who was the greatest wit of the court of Charles I., and the greatest dullard in that of Charles II.* But Heavens how awful are the revolutions of coxcombry! what a change from Beau Fielding the Beauty, to Beau Fielding the Oddity!

After I had remained in this apartment about ten minutes, the great man made his appearance. He was attired in a dressing-gown of the most gorgeous material and color, but so old that it was difficult to conceive any period of past time which it might not have been supposed to have witnessed; a little velvet cap, with a tarnished gold tassel, surmounted his head, and his nether limbs were sheathed in a pair of military boots. In person, he still retained the trace of that extraordinary symmetry he had once possessed, and his features were yet handsome, though the complexion had grown coarse and florid, and the expression had settled into a broad, hardy, farcical mixture of effrontery, humor, and conceit.

But how different his costume from that of old? Where was the long wig with its myriad curls? the coat stiff with golden lace? the diamond buttons—"the pomp, pride, and circumstance of glorious war?" the glorious war Beau Fielding had carried on throughout the female

* The Earl of Norwich.

world—finding in every saloon a Blenheim—in every play-house a Ramilies? Alas! to what abyss of fate will not the love of notoriety bring men! To what but the lust of show do we owe the misanthropy of Timon, or the ruin of Beau Fielding!

"By the Lord!" cried Mr. Fielding, approaching, and shaking me familiarly by the hand, "by the Lord, I am delighted to see thee! As I am a soldier, I thought thou wert a spirit, invisible and incorporeal—and as long as I was in that belief I trembled for thy salvation, for I knew at least that thou wert not a spirit of Heaven; since thy door is the very reverse of the doors above, which we are assured shall be opened unto our knocking. But thou art early, Count; like the ghost, in Hamlet, thou snuffest the morning air.—Wilt thou not keep out the rank atmosphere by a pint of wine and a toast?"

"Many thanks to you, Mr. Fielding; but I have at least one property of a ghost, and don't drink after day-break."

"Nay, now, 'tis a bad rule! a villanous bad rule, fit *only for* ghosts and gray beards. We youngsters, Count, should have a more generous policy. Come now, where did'st thou drink last night? has the bottle bequeathed thee a qualm or a head-ache, which preaches repentance and abstinence this morning?"

"No, but I visit my mistress this morning; would you have me smell of strong potations, and seem a worshipper of the '*Glass* of Fashion,' rather than of 'the Mould of Form?' Confess, Mr. Fielding, that the women love not an early tippler, and that they expect sober and sweet kisses from a pair of 'youngsters,' like us."

"By the Lord," cried Mr. Fielding, stroking down his comely stomach, "there is a great show of reason in thy excuses, but only the show, not substance, my noble Count. You know me, you know *my* experience with the women—I would not boast, as I'm a soldier—but 'tis something! nine hundred and fifty locks of hair have I got in my strong box, under padlock and key; fifty within the last week—true—on my soul—so that I may pretend to know a little of the dear creatures; well, I give thee my honor, Count, that they like a royster; they love a fellow who can carry his six bottles under a silken doublet; there's vigor and manhood in it—and, then, too, what a power of toasts can a six-bottle man drink to his mistress! Oh, 'tis your only chivalry now—your modern substitute for tilt and tournament; true, Count, as I'm a soldier!"

"I fear my Dulcinea differs from the herd, then; for she quarrelled with me for supping with St. John three nights ago, and—"

"St. John," interrupted Fielding, cutting me off in the beginning of a witticism, "St. John, famous fellow, is he not? By the Lord, we will drink to his administration, you in chocolate, I in Madeira. O'Carroll, you dog—O'Carroll—rogue—rascal—ass—dolt!"

"The same, your honor," said the orange-colored lackey, thrusting in his lean visage.

"Ay, the same indeed—thou anatomized son of St. Patrick; why dost thou not get fat? thou shamest my good living, and thy belly is a rascally minister to thee, devouring all things for itself, without fattening a single member of the body corporate. Look at *me*, you dog, am *I* thin? Go and get fat, or I will discharge thee—by the Lord I will! the sun shines through thee like an empty wine glass."

"And is it upon your honor's lavings you would have me get fat?" rejoined Mr. O'Carroll, with an air of deferential inquiry.

"Now, as I live, thou art the impudentest varlet!" cried Mr. Fielding, stamping his foot on the floor, with an angry frown.

"And is it for talking of your honor's lavings? an' sure that's *nothing* at all, at all," said the valet, twirling his thumbs with expostulating innocence.

"Begone, rascal!" said Mr. Fielding, "begone; go to the Salop, and bring us a pint of Madeira, a toast, and a dish of chocolate."

"Yes, your honor, in a twinkling," said the valet, disappearing.

"A sorry fellow," said Mr. Fielding, "but honest and faithful, and loves me as well as a saint loves gold; 'tis his love makes him familiar."

Here the door was again opened, and the sharp face of Mr. O'Carroll again intruded.

"How, now, sirrah!" exclaimed his master.

Mr. O'Carroll, without answering by voice, gave a grotesque sort of signal between a wink and a beckon. Mr. Fielding rose, muttering an oath, and underwent a whisper. "By the Lord," cried he, seemingly in a furious passion, "and thou hast not got the bill cashed yet, though I told thee twice to have it done last evening!

Have I not my debts of honor to discharge, and did I not give the last guinea I had about me for a walking cane yesterday? Go down to the city immediately, sirrah, and bring me the change."

The valet again whispered.

"Ah," resumed Fielding, "ah—so far, you say, 'tis true; 'tis a great way, and perhaps the Count can't wait till you return. Prithee (turning to me), prithee now, is it not vexatious—no change about me, and my fool has not cashed a trifling bill I have for a thousand or so, on Messrs. Child! and the cursed Salop puts not its *trust* even in princes—'tis its way —'Gad now—you have not a guinea about you?"

What could I say? my guinea joined Tarleton's, in a visit to that bourne whence no *such* traveller e'er returned.

Mr. O'Carroll now vanished in earnest, the wine and the chocolate soon appeared. Mr. Fielding brightened up, recited his poetry, blessed his good fortune, promised to call on me in a day or two; and assured me, with a round oath, that the next time he had the honor of seeing me, he would treat me with another pint of Madeira, exactly of the same sort.

I remember well that it was the evening of the same day, in which I had paid this visit to the redoubted Mr. Fielding, that, on returning from a drum at Lady Hasselton's, I entered my ante-room with so silent a step, that I did not arouse even the keen senses of Monsieur Desmarais. He was seated by the fire, with his head supported by his hands, and intently poring over a huge folio. I had often observed that he possessed a literary turn, and all the hours in which he was unemployed by me, he was wont to occupy with books. I felt now, as I stood still and contemplated his absorbed attention in the contents of the book before him, a strong curiosity to know the nature of his studies; and so little did my taste second the routine of trifles in which I had been lately engaged, that in looking upon the earnest features of the man, on which the solitary light streamed calm and full; and impressed with the deep quiet and solitude of the chamber, together with the undisturbed sanctity of comfort presiding over the small, bright hearth, and contrasting what I saw with the brilliant scene—brilliant with gaudy, wearing, wearisome frivolities—which I had just quitted, a sensation of envy, at the enjoyments of my dependant, entered my breast, accompanied with a sentiment resembling humiliation at the nature of my own pursuits. I am generally thought a proud man, but I am never proud to my inferiors; nor can I imagine pride where there is not competition. I approached Desmarais, and said, in French,

"How is this? why did you not, like your fellows, take advantage of my absence, to persue your own amusements? They must be dull, indeed, if they do not hold out to you more tempting inducements than that colossal offspring of the press."

"Pardon me, sir," said Demarais, very respectfully, and closing the book, "pardon me, I was not aware of your return. Will Monsieur doff his cloak?"

"No; shut the door—wheel round that chair, and favor me with a sight of your book."

"Monsieur will be angry, I fear," said the valet (obeying the first two orders, but hesitating about the third), "with my course of reading: I confess that it is not very compatible with my station."

"Ah, some long romance, the *Clelia*—I suppose—nay, bring it hither—that is to say, if it be moveable by the strength of a single man."

Thus urged, Desmarais modestly brought me the book. Judge of my surprise when I found it was a volume of Leibnitz—a philosopher, then very much the rage—because one might talk of him very safely, without having read him.* Despite of my surprise, I could not help smiling when my eye turned from the book to the student. It is impossible to conceive an appearance less like a philosopher's than that of Jean Desmarais. His wig was of a nicety that would not have brooked the irregularity of a single hair; his dress was not preposterous, for I do not remember, among gentles or valets, a more really exquisite taste than that of Desmarais; but it evinced, in every particular, the arts of the toilet. A perpetual smile sat upon his lips—sometimes it deepened into a sneer—but that was the only change it ever experienced; an irresistible air of self-conceit gave piquancy to his long, marked features, small glittering eye, and withered

* Which is possibly the reason why there are so many disciples of Kant at the present moment.—Ed.

cheeks, on which a delicate and soft bloom excited suspicion of artificial embellishment. A very fit frame of body this for a valet; but, I humbly opine, a very unseemly one for a student of Leibnitz.

"And what," said I, after a short pause, "is your opinion of this philosopher; I understand that he has just written a work,* above all praise and all comprehension."

"It is true, Monsieur, that it is above his own understanding. He knows not what sly conclusions may be drawn from his premises; but I beg Monsieur's pardon, I shall be tedious and intrusive."

"Not a whit; speak out, and at length. So you conceive that Leibnitz makes ropes, which *others* will make into ladders?"

"Exactly so," said Desmarais; "all his arguments go to swell the sails of the great philosophical truth—'Necessity!' We are the things and toys of Fate, and its everlasting chain compels even the Power that creates, as well as the things created."

"Ha!" said I, who, though little versed at that time in these metaphysical subtleties, had heard St. John often speak of the strange doctrine to which Desmarais referred, "you are, then, a believer in the fatalism of Spinosa?"

"No, Monsieur," said Desmarais, with a complacent smile, "my system is my own—it is composed of the thoughts of others—but my thoughts are the cords which bind the various sticks into a fagot."

"Well," said I, smiling at the man's conceited air, "and what is your main dogma?"

"Our utter impotence."

"Pleasing! Mean you that we have no free will?"

"None."

"Why, then, you take away the very existence of vice and virtue; and, according to you, we sin or act well, not from our own accord, but because we are compelled and preordained to it."

Desmarais' smile withered into the grim sneer with which, as I have said, it was sometimes varied.

"Monsieur's penetration is extreme—but shall I not prepare his nightly draught?"

"No; answer me at length; and tell me the difference between good and ill, if we are compelled by Necessity to either."

*The Theodicœa.

Desmarais hemmed, and began. Despite of his caution, the coxcomb loved to hear himself talk, and he talked, therefore, to the following purpose:—

"Liberty is a thing impossible! Can you *will* a single action, however simple, independent of your organization—independent of the organization of others—independent of the order of things past—independent of the order of things to come? You cannot. But if not independent, you are dependent; if dependent, where is your liberty? where your freedom of will? Education disposes our characters—can you control your own education, begun at the hour of birth? You cannot. Our character, joined to the conduct of others, disposes of our happiness, our sorrow, our crime, our virtue. Can you control your character? We have already seen that you cannot. Can you control the conduct of others—others perhaps whom you have never seen, but who may ruin you at a word—a despot, for instance, or a warrior? You cannot. What remains? that if we cannot choose our characters, nor our fates, we cannot be accountable for either. If you are a good man, you are a lucky man; but you are not to be praised for what you could not help. If you are a bad man, you are an unfortunate one; but you are not to be execrated for what you could not prevent." *

"Then, most wise Desmarais, if you steal this diamond loop from my hat, you are only an unlucky man, not a guilty one, and worthy of my sympathy, not anger?"

"Exactly so—but you must hang me for it. You cannot control events, but you can modify man. Education, law, adversity, prosperity, correction, praise, modify him—without his choice, and sometimes without his perception. But once acknowledge Necessity, and evil passions cease; you may punish, you may destroy others, if for the safety and good of the commonwealth; but motives for doing so cease to be private: you can have no personal hatred to men for committing actions which they were irresistibly compelled to commit."

I felt, that however I might listen to and dislike these sentiments, it would not do for the master to argue with the domestic, espe-

* Whatever pretensions Monsieur Desmarais may have had to originality, this tissue of opinions is as old as philosophy itself.—Ed.

cially when there was a chance that he might have the worst of it. And so I was suddenly seized with a fit of sleepiness, which broke off our conversation. Meanwhile I inly resolved, in my own mind, to take the first opportunity of discharging a valet who saw no difference between good and evil, but that of luck; and who, by the irresistible compulsion of Necessity, might some day or other have the involuntary misfortune to cut the throat of his master!

I did not, however, carry this unphilosophical resolution into effect. Indeed, the rogue doubting, perhaps, the nature of the impression he had made on me, redoubled so zealously his efforts to please me in the science of his profession, that I could not determine upon relinquishing such a treasure for a speculative opinion, and I was too much accustomed to laugh at my Sosia, to believe there could be any reason to fear him.

CHAPTER VI.

An Universal Genius—Pericles turned Barber—Names of Beauties in 171—the Toasts of the Kit-Cat Club.

As I was riding with Tarleton towards Chelsea one day, he asked me if I had ever seen the celebrated Mr. Salter. "No," said I, "but I heard Steele talk of him the other night at Wills's. He is an antiquarian and a barber, is he not?"

"Yes, a shaving virtuoso; really a comical and strange character, and has oddities enough to compensate one for the debasement of talking with a man in his rank."

"Let us go to him forthwith," said I, spurring my horse into a canter.

"*Quod petis hic est*," cried Tarleton, "there is his house." And my companion pointed to

The first thing
bull's head, with
ture's wings on i
ing this, I felt
looked up and di
tor swinging from
strous pair of glas
seemed to me lil
nearer approach,
canoe, and a mos
skin, and glitteri
run cold, was la
of a Calmuc Tar

While lost in w
the apartment, u
a miser, and say

"Wonderful, s

"Wonderful, i
"you look like
by a Japanese cr

"He, he, he, si
said the little
"But it has be
all of it collected

"Simple, ind
how gets on the

"Bravely, sir,
tune?"

"No, no, my

"Nay, sir, nay
fer me to welcom

And, forthwith
an instant with
fiddle. Throwin
cheeks, our Don
thrummings, whi
made Tarleton
Three sober-loo
sat themselves d
started to their

lieve the whole museum, bull, wings, Indian canoe, and Calmuc Tartar, would have been set into motion by this new Orpheus, had not Tarleton, in a paroxysm of rage, seized him by the tail of the coat, and whirled him round, fiddle and all, with such velocity that the poor musician lost his equilibrium, and falling against a row of Chinese monsters, brought the whole set to the ground, where he lay covered by the wrecks that accompanied his overthrow, screaming and struggling, and grasping his fiddle, which every now and then, touched involuntarily by his fingers, uttered a dismal squeak, as if sympathizing in the disaster it had caused, until the drawer ran in, and raising the unhappy antiquarian, placed him on a great chair.

"O Lord!" groaned Don Saltero, "O Lord—my monsters—my monsters—the pagoda—the Mandarin, and the idol—where are they?—broken—ruined—annihilated!"

"No, sir—all safe, sir," said the drawer, a smart, small, smug, pert man; "put 'em down in the bill, nevertheless, sir. Is it Alderman Atkins, sir, or Mr. Higgins?"

"Pooh," said Tarleton, "bring me some lemonade—send the pagoda to the bricklayer—the mandarin to the surgeon—and the idol to the Papist over the way! There's a guinea to pay for their carriage. How are you, Don?"

"Oh, Mr. Tarleton, Mr. Tarleton! how could you be so cruel?"

"The nature of things demanded it, my good Don. Did I not call you a Chinese Adam? and how could you bear that name without undergoing the fall?"

"Oh, sir, this is no jesting matter—broke the railing of my pagoda—bruised my arm—cracked my fiddle—and cut me off in the middle of that beautiful air!—no jesting matter."

"Come, Mr. Salter," said I, "'tis very true!

Don Saltero loved fiddling
thing in the world, but ne
loved talking. So being
should be reimbursed for his
tifying himself with a glass
wine, he yielded to Tarleton
us his history. I believe
tertaining to the good barb
and I saw nothing extraord
long before it was over, we w
cellent good day, and a nev
monsters.

That evening we were eng
Cat Club, for though I wa
politics of its members, they
account of my literary pret
was there, and I commende
protection. We were very
favored us with three new t
O Venus, what beauties we
characters we murdered! N
important a synod to the fen
gods of the Kit-Cat Club. A
ing for the children of an a
the very names of those wh
of their ancestors leap withi
be unknown. What cheek
name of Carlisle? What h
as it touches the paper ins
Brudenel! The graceful God
ling enchantment of Harper
of Claverine, the gentle and
water, the damask cheek an
Hebe Manchester—what wil
race for whom alone these p
This history is a union of s
like the tree of the Sun, de
Polo, which was green when a
side, but white when perceive
to me it is clothed in the ve

rank he held in the state, and the consequent business with which he was oppressed, would suffer me—me who was prevented by religion from actively embracing any political party, and who therefore, though inclined to Toryism, associated pretty equally with all. St. John and myself formed a great friendship for each other, a friendship which no after change or chance could efface, but which exists, strengthened and mellowed by time, at the very hour in which I now write.

One evening he sent to tell me he should be alone, if I would sup with him; accordingly I repaired to his house. He was walking up and down the room with uneven and rapid steps, and his countenance was flushed with an expression of joy and triumph, very rare to the thoughtful and earnest calm which it usually wore. "Congratulate me, Devereux," said he, seizing me eagerly by the hand, "congratulate me!"

"For what?"

"Ay, true—you are not yet a politician—you cannot yet tell how dear—how inexpressibly dear to a politician, is a momentary and petty victory—but—if I were Prime Minister of this country, what would you say?"

"That you could bear the duty better than any man living—but remember, Harley is in the way."

'Ah, there's the rub," said St. John, slowly, and the expression of his face again changed from triumph to thoughtfulness; "but this is a subject not to your taste—let us choose another." And flinging himself into a chair, this singular man, who prided himself on suiting his conversation to every one, began conversing with me upon the lighter topics of the day; these we soon exhausted, and at last we settled upon that of love and women.

"I own," said I, "that in this respect, pleasure has disappointed as well as wearied me. I have longed for some better object of worship than the trifler of fashion, or the yet more ignoble minion of the senses. I ask a vent for enthusiasm—for devotion—for romance—for a thousand subtle and secret streams of unuttered and unutterable feeling. I often think that I bear within me the desire and the sentiment of poetry, though I enioy not its faculty of expression; and that that desire and that sentiment, denied legitimate egress, centre and shrink into one absorbing passion—which is the want of love. Where am I to satisfy this want? I look round these great circles of gaiety which we term the world—I send forth my heart as a wanderer over their regions and recesses, and it returns sated, and palled, and languid, to myself again."

"You express a common want in every less worldly or more morbid nature," said St. John, "a want which I myself have experienced, and if I had never felt it, I should never, perhaps, have turned to ambition, to console or to engross me. But do not flatter yourself that the want will ever be fulfilled. Nature places us alone in this inhospitable world, and no heart is cast in a similar mould to that which we bear within us. We pine for sympathy; we make to ourselves a creation of ideal beauties, in which we expect to find it—but the creation has no reality—it is the mind's phantasma which the mind adores—and it is because the phantasma can have no actual being that the mind despairs. Throughout life, from the cradle to the grave, it is no real or living thing which we demand; it is the realization of the idea we have formed within us, and which, as we are not gods, we can never call into existence. We are enamored of the statue ourselves have graven; but, unlike the statue of the Cyprian, it kindles not to our homage, nor melts to our embraces."

"I believe you," said I; "but it is hard to undeceive ourselves. The heart is the most credulous of all fanatics, and its ruling passion the most enduring of all superstitions. Oh! what can tear from us, to the last, the hope, the desire, the yearning for some bosom which, while it mirrors our own, parts not with the reflection. I have read that, in the very hour and instant of our birth, one exactly similar to ourselves, in spirit and form, is born also, and that a secret and unintelligible sympathy preserves that likeness, even through the vicissitudes of fortune and circumstance, until, in the same point of time, the two beings are resolved once more into the elements of earth—confess that there is something welcome, though unfounded in the fancy, and that there are few of the substances of worldly honor which one would not renounce, to possess, in the closest and fondest of all relations, this shadow of ourselves!"

"Alas!" said St. John, "the possession, like all earthly blessings, carries within it its

own principle of corruption. The deadliest foe to love is not change, nor misfortune, nor jealousy, nor wrath, nor anything that flows from passion, or emanates from fortune; the deadliest foe to it is *custom!* With custom die away the delusions and the mysteries which encircle it; leaf after leaf, in the green poetry on which its beauty depends, droops and withers, till nothing but the bare and rude trunk is left. With all passion the soul demands something unexpressed, some vague recess to explore or to marvel upon—some veil upon the mental as well as the corporeal deity. Custom leaves nothing to romance, and often but little to respect. The whole character is bared before us like a plain, and the heart's eye grows wearied with the sameness of the survey. And to weariness succeeds distaste, and to distaste, one of the myriad shapes of the Proteus Aversion—so that the passion we would make the rarest of treasures fritters down to a very instance of the commonest of proverbs—and out of familiarty cometh indeed contempt!"

"And are we, then," said I, for ever to forego the most delicious of our dreams? Are we to consider love as an entire delusion, and to reconcile ourselves to an eternal solitude of heart? What then shall fill the crying and unappeasable void of our souls? What shall become of those mighty sources of tenderness which, refused all channel in the rocky soil of the world, must have an outlet elsewhere, or stagnate into torpor?"

"Our passions," said St. John, "are restless, and will make each experiment in their power, though vanity be the result of all. Disappointed in love, they yearn towards ambition; *and the object of ambition, unlike that of love, never being wholly possessed, ambition is the more durable passion of the two.* But sooner or later even that, and all passions, are sated at last; and when wearied of too wide a flight, we limit our excursions, and looking round us, discover the narrow bounds of our proper end, we grow satisfied with the loss of rapture, if we can partake of enjoyment: and the experience which seemed at first so bitterly to betray us becomes our most real benefactor, and ultimately leads us to content. For it is the excess and not the nature of our passions which is perishable. Like the trees which grew by the tomb of Protesilaus, the passions flourish till they reach a certain height, but no sooner is that height attained than they wither away."

Before I could reply, our conversation received an abrupt and complete interruption for the night. The door was thrown open, and a man, pushing aside the servant with a rude and yet a dignified air, entered the room unannounced, and with the most perfect disregard to ceremony—

"How d'ye do, Mr. St. John," said he—"how d'ye do?—Pretty sort of a day we've had.—Lucky to find you at home—that is to say, if you will give me some broiled oysters and campagne for supper."

"With all my heart, Doctor," said St. John, changing his manner at once from the pensive to an easy and somewhat brusque familiarity—"with all my heart; but I am glad to hear you are a convert to champagne: you spent a whole evening last week in endeavoring to dissuade me from the sparkling sin."

"Pish! I had suffered the day before from it, so like a true Old Bailey penitent, I preached up conversion to others, not from a desire of their welfare, but a plaguy sore feeling for my own misfortune. Where did you dine to-day? At home! Oh! the devil! I starved on three courses at the Duke of Ormond's."

"Aha! Honest Matt was there?"

"Yes, to my cost. He borrowed a shilling of me for a chair. Hang this weather, it costs me seven shillings a day for coach-fare, besides my paying the fares of all my poor brother parsons, who come over from Ireland to solicit my patronage for a bishopric, and end by borrowing half-a-crown in the meanwhile. But Matt Prior will pay me again, I suppose, out of the public money?"

"To be sure, if Chloe does not ruin him first."

"Hang the slut: don't talk of her. How Prior rails against his place.* He says the exercise spoils his wit, and that the only rhymes he ever dreams of nowadays are 'docket and cocket.'"

"Ha, ha! we must do something better for Matt—make him a bishop or an ambassador. But, pardon me, Count, I have not yet made known to you the most courted, authoritative, impertinent, clever, independent, haughty, delightful, troublesome parson of the age: do homage to Dr. Swift. Doctor, be merciful to my particular friend, Count Devereux."

* In the Customs.

Drawing himself up, with a manner which contrasted his previous one strongly enough, Dr. Swift saluted me with a dignity which might even be called polished, and which certainly showed that however he might prefer as his usual demeanor, an air of negligence, and semi-rudeness, he had profited sufficiently by his acquaintance with the great to equal them in the external graces, supposed to be peculiar to their order, whenever it suited his inclination. In person, Swift is much above the middle height, strongly built, and with a remarkably fine outline of throat and chest; his front face is certainly displeasing, though far from uncomely; but the clear chiselling of the nose, the curved upper lip, the full, round Roman chin, the hanging brow, and the resolute decision, stamped upon the whole expression of the large forehead, and the clear blue eye, make his profile one of the most striking I ever saw. He honored me, to my great surprise, with a fine speech and a compliment; and then, with a look, which menaced to St John the retort that ensued, he added; "And I shall always be glad to think that I owe your acquaintance to Mr. Secretary St. John, who, if he talked less about operas and singers—thought less about Alcibiades and Pericles—if he never complained of the load of business not being suited to his temper, at the very moment he had been working, like Gumdragon, to get the said load upon his shoulders; and if he persuaded one of his sincerity being as great as his genius,—would appear to all time, as adorned with the choicest gifts that Heaven has yet thought fit to bestow on the children of men. Prithee now, Mr. Sec., when shall we have the oysters! Will you be merry to-night, Count?"

"Certainly; if one may find absolution for the champagne."

"I'll absolve you, with a vengeance, on condition that you'll walk home with me, and protect the poor parson from the Mohawks. Faith, they ran young Davenant's chair through with a sword, t'other night. I hear they have sworn to make daylight through my Tory cassock—all Whigs you know, Count Devereux, nasty, dangerous animals, how I hate them; they cost me five-and-sixpence a week in chairs to avoid them."

"Never mind, Doctor, I'll send my servants home with you," said St. John.

"Ay, a nice way of mending the matter—that's curing the itch by scratching the skin off. I could not give your tall fellows less than a crown a-piece, and I could buy off the bloodiest Mohawk in the kingdom, if he's a Whig, for half that sum. But, thank Heaven, the supper is ready."

And to supper we went. The oysters and champagne seemed to exhilarate, if it did not refine, the Doctor's wit. St. John was unusually brilliant. I myself caught the infection of their humor, and contributed my quota to the common stock of jest and repartee; and that evening, spent with the two most extraordinary men of the age, had in it more of broad and familiar mirth than any I have ever wasted in the company of the youngest and noisiest disciples of the bowl and its concomitants. Even amidst all the coarse ore of Swift's conversation, the diamond perpetually broke out; his vulgarity was never that of a vulgar mind. Pity that, while he condemned St. John's over affectation of the graces of life, he never perceived that his own affectation of coarseness and brutality, was to the full as unworthy of the simplicity of intellect;* and that the aversion to cant, which was the strongest characteristic of his mind, led him into the very faults he despised, only through a more displeasing and offensive road. That same aversion to cant is, by the way, the

* It has been said that Swift was only coarse in his later years, and, with a curious ignorance both of fact and of character, that Pope was the cause of the Dean's grossness of taste. There is no doubt that he grew coarser with age; but there is also no doubt that, graceful and dignified as that great genius could be when he pleased, he affected at a period earlier than the one in which he is now introduced, to be coarse both in speech and manner. I seize upon this opportunity, *mal apropos* as it is, to observe that Swift's preference of Harley to St. John is by no means so certain as writers have been pleased generally to assert. Warton has already noted a passage in one of Swift's letters to Bolingbroke, to which I will beg to call the reader's attention.

"It is *you were* my hero, but the other (Lord Oxford) *never was;* yet if he were, it was your own fault, who taught me to love him, and often vindicated him, in the beginning of your ministry, from my accusations. But I granted he had the greatest inequalities of any man alive; and his whole scene was fifty times more a what-d'ye-call-it than yours; for I declare yours was *unie*, and I wish you would so order it that the world may be as wise as I upon that article."

I have to apologize for introducing this quotation, which I have done because (and I entreat the reader to remember this) I observe that Count Devereux always speaks of Lord Bolingbroke as he was spoken of by the eminent men of that day—not as he is now rated by the judgment of posterity.—Ed.

greatest and most prevalent enemy to the reputation of high and of strong minds; and in judging Swift's character in especial, we should always bear it in recollection. This aversion —the very antipodes to hypocrisy—leads men not only to disclaim the virtues they have, but to pretend to the vices they have not. Foolish trick of disguised vanity! the world, alas, readily believes them!—Like Justice Overdo —in the garb of poor Arthur of Bradley, they may deem it a virtue to have assumed the disguise; but they must not wonder if the sham Arthur is taken for the real, beaten as a vagabond and set in the stocks as a rogue!

CHAPTER VIII.

Lightly won—lightly lost.—A Dialogue of equal Instruction and Amusement.—A Visit to Sir Godfrey Kneller.

One morning Tarleton breakfasted with me. "I don't see the little page," said he, "who was always in attendance in your ante-room, what the deuce has become of him?"

"You must ask his mistress; she has quarrelled with me, and withdrawn both her favor and her messenger."

"What, the Lady Hasselton quarrelled with you! *Diable!* Wherefore?"

"Because I am not enough of the 'pretty fellow;' am tired of carrying hood and scarf, and sitting behind her chair through five long acts of a dull play; because I disappointed her in not searching for at every drum and quadrille party; because I admired not her monkey; and because I broke a tea-pot with a toad for a cover."

"And is not that enough?" cried Tarleton. "Heavens! what a black bead-roll of offences; Mrs. Merton would have discarded me for one of them. However, thy account has removed my surprise; I heard her praise thee the other day; now, as long as she loved thee, she always abused thee like a pickpocket."

"Ha!—ha!—ha!—and what said she in my favor?"

"Why, that you were certainly very handsome, though you were small; that you were certainly a great genius, though every one would not discover it; and that you certainly had quite the air of high birth, though you were not nearly so well dressed as Beau Tippetly. But *entre nous*, Devereux, I think she hates you, and would play you a trick of spite—revenge is too strong a word—if she could find an opportunity."

"Likely enough, Tarleton; but a coquette's lover is always on his guard; so she will not take me unawares."

"So be it. But tell me, Devereux, who is to be your next mistress, Mrs. Denton, or Lady Clancathcart? the world gives them both to you."

"The world is always as generous with what is worthless as the bishop in the fable was with his blessing. However, I promise thee, Tarleton, that I will not interfere with thy claims, either upon Mrs. Denton or Lady Clancathcart."

"Nay," said Tarleton, "I will own that you are a very Scipio; but it must be confessed, even by you, satirist as you are, that Lady Clancathcart has a beautiful set of features."

"A handsome face, but so vilely made. She would make a splendid picture if, like the goddess Laverna, she could be painted as a head without a body."

"Ha!—ha!—ha!—you have a bitter tongue, Count; but Mrs. Denton, what have you to say against her?"

"Nothing; she has no pretensions for me to contradict. She has a green eye and a sharp voice; a mincing gait and a broad foot. What friend of Mrs. Denton's would not, therefore, counsel her to a prudent obscurity?"

"She never had but one lover in the world," said Tarleton, "who was old, blind, lame, and poor; she accepted him, and became Mrs. Denton."

"Yes," said I, "she was like the magnet, and received her name from the very first person * sensible of her attraction."

"Well, you have a shrewd way of saying sweet things," said Tarleton; "but I must own that you rarely or never direct it towards women individually. What makes you break through your ordinary custom?"

"Because I am angry with women collectively; and must pour my spleen through whatever channel presents itself."

"Astonishing," said Tarleton; "I despise women myself. I always did: but you were their most enthusiastic and chivalrous defender

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* Magnes.

a month or two ago. What makes thee change, my Sir Amadis?"

"Disappointment! they weary, vex, disgust me; selfish, frivolous, mean, heartless—out on them—'tis a disgrace to have their love!"

"*O ciel!* What a sensation the news of thy misogyny will cause; the young, gay, rich, Count Devereux, whose wit, vivacity, splendor of appearance, in equipage and dress, in the course of one season have thrown all the most established beaux and pretty fellows into the shade; to whom dedications, and odes, and billet-doux, are so much waste paper; who has carried off the most general envy and dislike that any man ever was blest with, since St. John turned politician; what! thou all of a sudden to become a railer against the divine sex that made thee what thou art! Fly—fly—unhappy apostate, or expect the fate of Orpheus, at least!"

"None of your railleries, Tarleton, or I shall speak to you of plebeians, and the canaille!"

"*Sacre!* my teeth are on edge already! Oh, the base—base canaille, how I loathe them! Nay, Devereux, joking apart, I love you twice as well for your humor. I despise the sex heartily. Indeed, *sub rosâ* be it spoken, there are few things that breathe which I do not despise. Human nature seems to me a most pitiful bundle of rags and scraps, which the gods threw out of Heaven, as the dust and rubbish there."

"A pleasant view of thy species," said I.

"By my soul it is. Contempt is to me a luxury. I would not lose the privilege of loathing for all the objects which fools ever admired. What does old Persius say on the subject?

'Hoc ridere meum tam nil, nulla tibi vendo Iliade.'" *

"And yet, Tarleton," said I, "the littlest feeling of all is a delight in contemplating the littleness of other people. Nothing is more contemptible than habitual contempt."

"Prithee, now," answered the haughty aristocrat, "let us not talk of these matters so subtly—leave me my enjoyment without refining upon it. What is your first pursuit for the morning?"

"Why, I have promised my uncle a picture of that invaluable countenance which Lady Hasselton finds so handsome; and I am going to give Kneller my last sitting."

"So, so, I will accompany you; I like the vain old dog; 'tis a pleasure to hear him admire himself so wittily."

"Come, then!" said I, taking up my hat and sword; and, entering Tarleton's carriage, we drove to the painter's abode.

We found him employed in finishing a portrait of Lady Godolphin.

"He, he!" cried he, when he beheld me approach. "By Got, I am glad to see you, Count Tevereux; dis painting is tamned poor work by oneself, widout any one to make *des grands yeux*, and cry, 'O, Sir Godfrey Kneller, how fine dis is!'"

"Very true, indeed," said I, "no great man can be expected to waste his talents without his proper reward of praise. But, Heavens, Tarleton, did you ever see anything so wonderful?—that hand—that arm—how exquisite! If Apollo turned painter, and borrowed colors from the rain-bow, and models from the goddesses, he would not be fit to hold the pallet to Sir Godfrey Kneller."

"By Got, Count Tevereux, you are von grand judge of painting," cried the artist, with sparkling eyes, "and I vill paint you as von tamned handsome man!"

"Nay, my Apelles, you might as well preserve some likeness."

"Likeness, by Got! I vill make you like and handsome both. By my shoul you make me von Apelles, I vill make you von Alexander!"

"People in general," said Tarleton, gravely, "believe that Alexander had a wry neck, and was a very plain fellow; but no one can know about Alexander like Sir Godfrey Kneller, who has studied military tactics so accurately, and who, if he had taken up the sword instead of the pencil, would have been at least an Alexander himself."

"By Got, Meester Tarleton, you are as goot a judge of de talents for de war as Count Tevereux of de *génie* for de painting! Meester Tarleton, I vill paint your pictnre, and I vill make your eyes von goot inch bigger than dey are!"

"Large or small," said I (for Tarleton, who had a haughty custom of contracting his orbs till they were scarce perceptible, was so much offended, that I thought it prudent to cut off

* "This privilege of mine, to laugh,—such a nothing as it seems,—I would not barter to thee for an Iliade."

his reply), "large or small, Sir Godfrey, Mr. Tarleton's eyes are capable of admiring your genius; why, your painting is like lightning, and one flash of your brush would be sufficient to restore even a blind man to sight."

"It is tamned true," said Sir Godfrey, earnestly; "and it did restore von man to sight once! By my shoul, it did! but sit yourself town, Count Tevereux, and look over your left shoulder—ah, dat is it—and now, praise on, Count Tevereux; de thought of my genius gives you—vat you call it—von animation—von fire, look you—by my shoul, it does!"

And by dint of such moderate panegyric, the worthy Sir Godfrey completed my picture, with equal satisfaction to himself and the original. See what a beautifier is flattery—a few sweet words will send the Count Devereux down to posterity, with at least three times as much beauty as he could justly lay claim to.*

* This picture, represents the Count in an undress. The face is decidedly, though by no means remarkably, handsome; the nose is aquiline—the upper lip short and chiselled—the eyes gray, and the forehead, which is by far the finest feature in the countenance, is peculiarly high, broad, and massive. The mouth has but little beauty; it is severe, caustic, and rather displeasing, from the extreme compression of the lips. The great and prevalent expression of the face is energy. The eye—the brow—the turn of the head—the erect, penetrating aspect—are all strikingly bold, animated, and even daring. And this expression makes a singular contrast to that in another likeness of the Count, which was taken at a much later period of life. The latter portrait represents him in a foreign uniform, decorated with orders. The peculiar sarcasm of the mouth is hidden beneath a very long and thick mustachio, of a much darker color than the hair (for in both portraits, as in Jervas's picture of Lord Bolingbroke, the hair is left undisguised by the odious fashion of the day). Across one cheek there is a slight scar, as of a sabre cut. The whole character of this portrait is widely different from that in the earlier one. Not a trace of the fire—the animation—which were so striking in the physiognomy of the youth of twenty,—is discoverable in the calm, sedate, stately, yet somewhat stern expression, which seems immoveably spread over the paler hue, and the more prominent features of the man of about four or five and thirty. Yet, upon the whole, the face in the latter portrait is handsomer; and, from its air of dignity and reflection, even more impressive than that in the one I have first described.—Ed.

CHAPTER IX.

A Development of Character, and a long Letter—a Chapter, on the whole, more important than it seems.

The scenes through which, of late, I have conducted my reader, are by no means episodical; they illustrate far more than mere narration, the career to which I was so honorably devoted. Dissipation—women—wine—Tarleton for a friend, Lady Hasselton for a mistress. Let me now throw aside the mask.

To people who have naturally very intense and very acute feelings, nothing is so fretting, so wearing to the heart, as the commonplace affections, which are the properties and offspring of the world. We have seen the birds which, with wings unclipt, children fasten to a stake. The birds seek to fly, and are pulled back before their wings are well spread; till, at last, they either perpetually strain at the end of their short tether, exciting only ridicule by their anguish, and their impotent impatience; or, sullen and despondent, they remain on the ground, without an attempt to fly, nor creep, even to the full limit which their fetters would allow. Thus is it with feelings of the keen, wild nature I speak of; they are either striving for ever to pass the little circle of slavery to which they are condemned, and so move laughter by an excess of action, and a want of adequate power; or they rest motionless and moody, disdaining the petty indulgence they *might* enjoy, till sullenness is construed into resignation, and despair seems the apathy of content. Time, however, cures what it does not kill: and both bird and breast, if they pine not to the death at first, grow tame and acquiescent at last.

What to me was the companionship of Tarleton, or the attachment of Lady Hasselton? I had yielded to the one, and I had half eagerly, half scornfully, sought the other. These and the avocations they brought with them, consumed my time, and of Time murdered, there is a ghost, which we term *Ennui*. The hauntings of this spectre are the especial curse of the higher orders; and hence springs a certain consequence to the passions. Persons in those ranks of society, so exposed to Ennui, are either rendered totally incapable of real love, or they love far more intensely than those in a lower station; for the affections in them are either utterly frittered away on a thousand

petty objects (poor shifts to escape the persecuting spectre), or else, early disgusted with the worthlessness of these objects, the heart turns within and languishes for something not found in the daily routine of life. When this is the case, and when the pining of the heart is once satisfied, and the object of love is found, there are two mighty reasons why the love should be most passionately cherished. The first is, the utter indolence in which aristocratic life oozes away, and which allows full food for that meditation which can nurse by sure degrees the weakest desire into the strongest passion; and the second reason is, that the insipidity and hollowness of all partrician pursuits and pleasures render the excitement of love more delicious and more necessary to the "*ignavi terrarum domini*," than it is to those orders of society more usefully, more constantly, and more engrossingly engaged.

Wearied and sated with the pursuit of what was worthless, my heart, at last, exhausted itself in pining for what was pure. I recurred with a tenderness which I struggled with at first, and which in yielding to, I blushed to acknowledge, to the memory of Isora. And in the world, surrounded by all which might be supposed to cause me to forget her, my heart clung to her far more endearingly than it had done in the rural solitudes in which she had first allured it. The truth was this; at the time I first loved her, other passions—passions almost equally powerful — shared her empire. Ambition and pleasure—vast whirlpools of thought—had just opened themselves a channel in my mind, and thither the tides of my desires were hurried and lost. Now those whirlpools had lost their power, and the channels being dammed up, flowed back upon my breast. Pleasure had disgusted me, and the only ambition I had yet courted and pursued had palled upon me still more. I say, the only ambition—for as yet that which is of the loftier and more lasting kind had not afforded me a temptation; and the hope which had borne the name and rank of ambition had been the hope rather to glitter than to rise.

These passions, not yet experienced when I lost Isora, had afforded me at that period a ready comfort and a sure engrossment. And, in satisfying the hasty jealousies of my temper, in deeming Isora unworthy, and Gerald my rival, I naturally aroused in my pride a dexterous orator as well as a firm ally. Pride not only strengthened my passions, it also persuaded them by its voice; and it was not till the languid, yet deep, stillness of sated wishes and palled desires fell upon me, that the low accent of a love still surviving at my heart made itself heard in answer.

I now began to take a different view of Isora's conduct. I now began to doubt, where I had formerly believed; and the doubt, first allied to fear, gradually brightened into hope. Of Gerald's rivalry, at least of his identity with Barnard, and, consequently, of his power over Isora, there was, and there could be, no feeling short of certainty. But of what nature was that power? Had not Isora assured me that it was not love? Why should I disbelieve her? Nay, did she not love myself? had not her cheek blushed and her hand trembled when I addressed her? Were these signs the counterfeits of love? Were they not rather of that heart's dye which no skill *can* counterfeit? She had declared that she could not, that she could never, be mine: she had declared so with a fearful earnestness which seemed to annihilate hope; but had she not also, in the same meeting, confessed that I was dear to her? Had not her lip given me a sweeter and a more eloquent assurance of that confession than words?—and could hope perish while love existed? She had left me—she had bid me farewell for ever; but that was no proof of a want of love, or of her unworthiness. Gerald, or Barnard, evidently possessed an influence over father as well as child. Their departure from * * * * might have been occasioned by him, and she might have deplored, while she could not resist it: or she might *not* even have deplored: nay, she might have desired, she might have advised it, for my sake as well as hers, were she thoroughly convinced that the union of our loves was impossible.

But, then, of what nature could be this mysterious authority which Gerald possessed over her? That which he possessed over the sire, political schemes might account for; but these, surely, could not have much weight for the daughter. This, indeed, must still remain doubtful and unaccounted for. One presumption, that Gerald was either no favored lover, or that he was unacquainted with her retreat, might be drawn from his continued residence at Devereux Court. If he loved Isora, and

knew her present abode, would he not have sought her? Could he, I thought, live away from that bright face, if once allowed to behold it? unless, indeed, (terrible thought!) there hung over it the dimness of guilty familiarity, and indifference had been the offspring of possession. But was that delicate and virgin face, where changes, with every moment, coursed each other, harmonious to the changes of the mind, as shadows in a valley reflect the clouds of heaven!—was that face, so ingenuous, so girlishly revelant of all,—even of the slightest, the most transitory—emotion, the face of one hardened in deceit and inured to shame? The countenance is, it is true, but a faithless mirror: but what man that has studied women will not own that there is, at least while the down of first youth is not brushed away, in the eye and cheek of a zoned and untainted Innocence, that which survives not even the fruition of a lawful love, and has no (nay, not even a shadowed and imperfect) likeness in the face of Guilt? Then, too, had any worldlier or mercenary sentiment entered her breast respecting me, would Isora have flown from the suit of the eldest scion of the rich house of Devereux?—and would she, poor and destitute, the daughter of an alien and an exile, would she have spontaneously relinquished any hope of obtaining that alliance which maidens of the loftiest houses of England had not disdained to desire? Thus confused and incoherent, but thus yearning fondly towards her image and its imagined purity, did my thoughts daily and hourly array themselves; and, in proportion as I suffered common ties to drop from me one by one, those thoughts clung the more tenderly to that which, though severed from the rich argosy of former love, was still indissolubly attached to the anchor of its hope.

It was during this period of revived affection that I received the following letter from my uncle:—

"I thank thee for thy long letter, my dear boy; I read it over three times with great delight. Od'sfish, Morton, you are a sad Pickle, I fear, and seem to know all the ways of the town as well as your old uncle did some thirty years ago! 'Tis a very pretty acquaintance with human nature that your letters display. You put me in mind of little Sid, who was just about your height, and who had just such a pretty, shrewd way of expressing himself in simile and point. Ah, it is easy to see that you have profited by your old uncle's conversation, and that Farquhar and Etherege were not studied for nothing.

"But I have sad news for thee, my child, or rather it is sad for me to tell thee my tidings. It is sad for the old birds to linger in their nest when the young ones take wing and leave them; but it is merry for the young birds to get away from the dull old tree, and frisk it in the sunshine—merry for them to get mates, and have young themselves. Now, do not think, Morton, that by speaking of mates and young, I am going to tell thee thy brothers are already married; nay, there is time enough for those things, and I am not friendly to early weddings, nor, to speak truly, a marvellous great admirer of that holy ceremony at any age; for the which there may be private reasons, too long to relate to thee now. Moreover, I fear my young day was a wicked time—a heinous wicked time, and we were wont to laugh at the wedded state, until, body of me, some of us found it no laughing matter.

"But to return, Morton—to return to thy brothers—they have both left me; and the house seems to me not the good old house it did when ye were all about me; and, somehow or other, I look now oftener at the church-yard than I was wont to do. You are all gone now—all shot up, and become men; and when your old uncle sees you no more, and recollects that all his own contemporaries are out of the world, he cannot help saying, as William Temple, poor fellow, once prettily enough said, 'Methinks it seems an impertinence in me to be still alive.' You went first, Morton; and I missed you more than I cared to say: but you were always a kind boy to those you loved, and you wrote the old knight merry letters, that made him laugh, and think he was grown young again—(faith, boy, that was a jolly story of the three Squires at Button's!)—and once a week comes your packet, well filled, as if you did not think it a task to make me happy, which your hand-writing always does; nor a shame to my gray hairs that I take pleasure in the same things that please thee! So, thou seest, my child, that I have got through thy absence pretty well, save that I have had no one to read thy letters to; for Gerald and thou are still jealous of each other—a great sin in thee, Morton, which I prithee to reform. And Aubrey, poor lad, is a little too rigid, considering his years, and it looks not well in the dear boy to shake his head at the follies of his uncle. And as to thy mother, Morton, I read her one of thy letters, and she said thou wert a graceless reprobate to think so much of this wicked world, and to write so familiarly to thine aged relative. Now, I am not a young man, Morton; but the word aged has a sharp sound with it when it comes from a lady's mouth.

"Well, after thou hadst been gone a month, Aubrey and Gerald, as I wrote thee word long since, in the last letter I wrote thee with my own hand, made a tour together for a little while, and that was a hard stroke on me. But after a week or two Gerald returned; and I went out in my chair to see the dear boy shoot—'sdeath, Morton, he handles the gun well. And then Aubrey returned alone: but he looked pined, and moping, and shut himself up, and as thou dost love him so, I did not like to tell thee, till now, when he is quite well, that he alarmed me much for him; he is too much addicted to his devotions, poor child, and seems to forget that the hope of the next world ought to make us happy in this. Well, Morton, at last, two months ago, Aubrey left us again, and Gerald last week set off on a tour through the sister kingdom, as it is called; Faith, boy, if Scotland and England are sister kingdoms, 'tis a thousand pities for Scotland that they are not co-heiresses!

"I should have told thee of this news before, but I

have had, as thou knowest, the gout so villanously in my hand, that, till t'other day, I have not held a pen, and old Nicholls, my amanuensis, is but a poor scribe; and I did not love to let the dog write to thee on all our family affairs—especially as I have a secret to tell thee which makes me plaguy uneasy. Thou must know, Morton, that after thy departure Gerald asked me for thy rooms; and though I did not like that any one else should have what belonged to thee, yet I have always had a foolish antipathy to say 'No!' so thy brother had them, on condition to leave them exactly as they were, and to yield them to thee whenever thou shouldst return to claim them. Well, Morton, when Gerald went on his tour with thy youngest brother, old Nicholls—you know 'tis a garrulous fellow—told me one night, that his son Hugh—you remember Hugh, a thin youth, and a tall—lingering by the beach one evening, saw a man, wrapped in a cloak, come out of the castle cave, unmoor one of the boats, and push off to the little island opposite. Hugh swears by more than yea and nay, that the man was Father Montreuil. Now, Morton, this made me very uneasy, and I saw why thy brother Gerald wanted thy rooms, which communicate so snugly with the sea. So I told Nicholls, slily, to have the great iron gate at the mouth of the passage carefully locked; and when it was locked, I had an iron plate put over the whole lock, that the lean Jesuit might not creep even through the keyhole. Thy brother returned, and I told him a tale of the smugglers, who have really been too daring of late, and insisted on the door being left as I had ordered; and I told him, moreover, though not as if I had suspected his communication with the priest, that I interdicted all further converse with that limb of the church. Thy brother heard me with an indifferently bad grace; but I was peremptory, and the thing was agreed on.

"Well, child, the day before Gerald last left us, I went to take leave of him in his own room—to tell thee the truth, I had forgotten his travelling expenses—when I was on the stairs of the tower, I heard—by the Lord I did—Montreuil's voice in the outer-room, as plainly as ever I heard it at prayers. Od'sfish, Morton, I was an angered, and I made so much haste to the door, that my foot slipped by the way; thy brother heard me fall, and came out; but I looked at him as I never looked at thee, Morton, and entered the room. Lo, the priest was not there; I searched both chambers in vain; so I made thy brother lift up the trap-door, and kindle a lamp, and I searched the room below, and the passage. The priest was invisible. Thou knowest, Morton, that there is only one egress in the passage, and that was locked, as I said before, so where the devil—the devil indeed—could thy tutor have escaped? He could not have passed me on the stairs without my seeing him; he could not have leaped the window without breaking his neck; he could not have got out of the passage without making himself a current of air—Od'sfish, Morton, this thing might puzzle a wiser man than thine uncle. Gerald affected to be mighty indignant at my suspicions; but, God forgive him, I saw he was playing a part. A man does not write plays, my child, without being keen-sighted in these little intrigues; and, moreover, it is impossible I could have mistaken thy tutor's voice, which, to do it justice, is musical enough, and is the most singular voice I ever heard—unless little Sid's be excepted.

"*Apropos*, of little Sid. I remember that in the Mall, when I was walking there alone, three weeks after my marriage, De Grammont and Sid joined me. I was in a melancholic mood—('sdeath, Morton. marriage tames a man as water tames mice!)—'Aha, Sir William,' cried Sedley, 'thou hast a cloud on thee—prithee now brighten it away: see, thy wife shines on thee, from the other end of the Mall.' 'Ah, talk not to a dying man of his physic!' said Grammont [that Grammont was a shocking rogue, Morton!]—'Prithee, Sir William, what is the chief characteristic of wedlock? is it a state of war or of peace?' 'Oh, peace to be sure!' cried Sedley, 'and Sir William and his lady carry with them the emblem.' 'How!' cried I; for I do assure thee, Morton, I was of a different turn of mind. 'How!' said Sid, gravely, 'why the emblem of peace is the *cornucopia*, which your lady and you equitably divide—she carries the *copia*, and you the *cor*—'. Nay, Morton, nay, I cannot finish the jest; for, after all, it was a sorry thing in little Sid, whom I had befriended like a brother, with heart and purse, to wound me so cuttingly; but 'tis the way with your jesters.

"Od'sfish, now how I have got out of my story! Well, I did not go back to my room, Morton, till I had looked to the outside of the iron door, and seen that the plate was as firm as ever: so now you have the whole of the matter. Gerald went the next day, and I fear me much lest he should already be caught in some Jacobite trap. Write me thy advice on the subject. Meanwhile I have taken the precaution to have the trap-door removed, and the aperture strongly boarded over.

"But 'tis time for me to give over. I have been four days on this letter, for the gout comes now to me oftener than it did, and I do not know when I may again write to thee with my own hand; so I resolved I would e'en empty my whole budget at once. Thy mother is well and blooming; she is, at the present, abstractedly employed in a prodigious piece of tapestry, which old Nicholls informs me is the wonder of all the women.

"Heaven bless thee, my child! Take care of thyself, and drink moderately. It is hurtful, at thy age, to drink above a gallon or so at a sitting. Heaven bless thee again, and when the weather gets warmer, thou must come with thy kind looks, to make me feel at home again. At present the country wears a cheerless face, and everything about us is harsh and frosty, except the blunt, good-for-nothing heart of thine uncle, and that, winter or summer, is always warm to thee.

"WILLIAM DEVEREUX."

"P.S. I thank thee heartily for the little spaniel of the new breed thou gottest me from the Duchess of Marlborough. It has the prettiest red and white, and the blackest eyes possible. But poor Ponto is as jealous as a wife three years married, and I cannot bear the old hound to be vexed, so I shall transfer the little creature, its rival, to thy mother."

This letter, tolerably characteristic of the blended simplicity, penetration, and overflowing kindness of the writer, occasioned me much anxious thought. There was no doubt in my mind but that Gerald and Montreuil were engaged in some intrigue for the exiled family. The disguised name which the former assumed, the state reasons which D'Alvarez confessed that Barnard, or rather Gerald, had for concealment, and which proved, at least, that some state plot

in which Gerald was engaged was known to the Spaniard, joined to those expressions of Montreuil, which did all but own a design for the restoration of the deposed Line, and the power which I knew he possessed over Gerald, whose mind, at once bold and facile, would love the adventure of the intrigue, and yield to Montreuil's suggestions on its nature; these combined circumstances left me in no doubt upon a subject deeply interesting to the honor of our house, and the very life of one of its members. Nothing, however, for me to do, calculated to prevent or impede the designs of Montreuil and the danger of Gerald, occurred to me. Eager alike in my hatred and my love, I said, inly, "What matters it whether one whom the ties of blood never softened towards me, with whom, from my childhood upwards, I have wrestled as with an enemy, what matters it whether he win fame or death in the perilous game he has engaged in?" And turning from this most generous, and most brotherly view of the subject, I began only to think whether the search or the society of Isora also influenced Gerald in his absence from home. After a fruitless and inconclusive meditation on that head, my thoughts took a less selfish turn, and dwelt with all the softness of pity, and the anxiety of love, upon the morbid temperament and ascetic devotions of Aubrey. What, for one already so abstracted from the enjoyments of earth, so darkened by superstitious misconceptions of the true nature of God, and the true objects of his creatures—what could be anticipated but wasted powers and a perverted life? Alas! when will men perceive the difference between religion and priestcraft! When will they perceive that reason, so far from extinguishing religion by a more gaudy light, sheds on it all its lustre? It is fabled that the first legislator of the Peruvians received from the deity a golden rod, with which in his wanderings he was to strike the earth, until in some destined spot the earth entirely absorbed it, and there—and there alone—was he to erect a temple to the Divinity. What is this fable but the cloak of an inestimable moral? Our reason is the rod of gold; the vast world of truth gives the soil, which it is perpetually to sound; and only where without resistance the soil receives the rod which guided and supported us, will our Altar be sacred and our worship be accepted.

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CHAPTER X.

Being a short Chapter, containing a most important Event.

SIR WILLIAM's letter was still fresh in my mind, when for want of some less noble quarter wherein to bestow my tediousness, I repaired to St. John. As I crossed the hall to his apartment, two men, just dismissed from his presence, passed me rapidly; one was unknown to me, but there was no mistaking the other—it was Montreuil. I was greatly startled; the priest not appearing to notice me, and conversing in a whispered, yet seemingly vehement tone, with his companion, hurried on, and vanished through the street door. I entered St. John's room: he was alone, and received me with his usual gaiety.

"Pardon me, Mr. Secretary," said I; "but if not a question of state, do inform me what you know respecting the taller one of those two gentlemen who have just quitted you?"

"It *is* a question of state, my dear Devereux, so my answer must be brief;—very little."

"You know who he is?"

"Yes, a Jesuit, and a marvellously shrewd one: the Abbé Montreuil."

"He was my tutor."

"Ah, so I have heard."

"And your acquaintance with him is positively and *bonâ fide* of a state nature?"

"Positively and *bonâ fide*."

"I could tell you something of him; he is certainly in the service of the Court at St. Germains, and a terrible plotter on this side the channel."

"Possibly; but I wish to receive no information respecting him."

One great virtue of business did St. John possess, and I have never known any statesman who possessed it so eminently: it was the discreet distinction between friends of the statesman and friends of the man. Much and intimately as I knew St. John, I could never glean from him a single secret of a state nature, until, indeed, at a later period, I leagued myself to a portion of his public schemes. Accordingly I found him, at the present moment, perfectly impregnable to my inquiries; and it was not till I knew Montreuil's companion was that celebrated intriguant, the Abbé Gaultier, that I ascertained the exact nature of the priest's business with St. John, and the exact motive

of the civilities he had received from Abigail Masham.* Being at last forced, despairingly, to give over the attempt on his discretion, I suffered St. John to turn the conversation upon other topics, and as these were not much to the existent humor of my mind I soon rose to depart.

"Stay, Count," said St. John; "shall you ride to-day?"

"If you will bear me company."

"*Volontiers*—to say the truth, I was about to ask you to canter your bay horse with me first to Spring Gardens,* where I have a promise to make to the director; and secondly, on a mission of charity to a poor foreigner of rank and birth, who, in his profound ignorance of this country, thought it right to enter into a plot with some wise heads, and to reveal it to some foolish tongues, who brought it to us with as much clatter as if it were a second gunpowder project. I easily brought him off that scrape, and I am now going to give him a caution for the future. Poor gentleman, I hear that he is grievously distressed in pecuniary matters, and I always had a kindness for exiles. Who knows but that a state of exile may be our own fate! and this alien is sprung from a race as haughty as that of St. John, or of Devereux. The *res angusta domi* must gall him sorely!"

"True," said I, slowly. "What may be the name of the foreigner?"

"Why—complain not hereafter that I do not trust you in state matters—I will divulge—D'Alvarez—Don Diego—an hidalgo of the best blood of Andalusia; and not unworthy of it, I fancy, in the virtues of fighting, though he may be in those of counsel. But—Heavens! Devereux—you seem ill!"

"No, no! Have you ever seen this man?"

"Never."

At this word a thrill of joy shot across me, for I knew St. John's fame for gallantry, and I was suspicious of the motives of his visit.

"St. John, I know this Spaniard—I know him well, and intimately. Could you not commission me to do your errand, and deliver your caution? Relief from me he might accept; from you, as a stranger, pride might forbid it; and you would really confer on me a personal and an essential kindness, if you would give me so fair an opportunity to confer kindness upon him."

"Very well, I am delighted to oblige you in any way. Take his direction; you see his abode is in a very pitiful suburb. Tell him from me that he is quite safe at present; but tell him also to avoid, henceforward, all imprudence, all connection with priests, plotters, *et tous ces gens-la*, as he values his personal safety, or at least his continuance in this most hospitable country. It is not from every wood that we make a Mercury, nor from every brain that we can carve a Mercury's genius of intrigue."

"Nobody ought to be better skilled in the materials requisite for such productions than Mr. Secretary St. John!" said I; "and now, adieu."

"Adieu, if you will not ride with me. We meet at Sir William Wyndham's tomorrow."

Masking my agitation till I was alone, I rejoiced when I found myself in the open streets. I summoned a hackney coach, and drove as rapidly as the vehicle would permit, to the petty and obscure suburb to which St. John had directed me. The coach stopped at the door of a very humble, but not absolutely wretched, abode. I knocked at the door. A woman opened it, and, in answer to my inquiries, told me that the poor foreign gentleman was very ill—very ill indeed—had suffered a paralytic stroke—not expected to live. His daughter was with him now—would see no one—even Mr. Barnard had been denied admission.

At that name my feelings, shocked and stunned at first by the unexpected intelligence of the poor Spaniard's danger, felt a sudden and fierce revulsion—I combated it. This is no time, I thought, for any jealous, for any selfish, emotion. If I can serve her, if I can relieve her father, let me be contented. "She will see me," I said aloud, and I slipped some money in the woman's hand. "I am an old friend of the family, and I shall not be an unwelcome intruder on the sick room of the sufferer."

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* *Viz.*—That Count Devereux ascertained the priest's communications and overtures from the Chevalier. The precise extent of Bolingbroke's secret negotiations with the exiled Prince is still one of the darkest portions of the history of that time. That negotiations *were* carried on, both by Harley and by St. John, very largely, and very closely, I need not say that there is no doubt.—

† Vauxhall.

"Intruder, sir—bless you, the poor gentleman is quite speechless and insensible."

At hearing this, I could refrain no longer. Isora's disconsolate, solitary, destitute condition, broke irresistibly upon me, and all scruple of more delicate and formal nature vanished at once. I ascended the stairs, followed by the old woman—she stopped me by the threshold of a room on the second floor, and whispered "*There!*" I paused an instant—collected breath and courage, and entered. The room was partially darkened. The curtains were drawn closely around the bed. By a table, on which stood two or three phials of medicine, I beheld Isora, listening with an eager, a *most* eager and intent face, to a man whose garb betrayed his healing profession, and who, laying a finger on the out-stretched palm of his other hand, appeared giving his precise instructions, and uttering that oracular breath which—mere human words to him—was a message of fate itself—a fiat on which hung all that makes life, life, to his trembling and devout listener. Monarchs of earth, ye have not so supreme a power over woe and happiness, as one village leech! As he turned to leave her, she drew from a most slender purse a few petty coins, and I saw that she muttered some words indicative of the shame of poverty, as she tremblingly tended them to the outstretched palm. Twice did that palm close and open on the paltry sum; and the third time the native instinct of the heart overcame the later impulse of the profession. The limb of Galen drew back, and shaking with a gentle oscillation his capitalian honors, he laid the money softly on the table, and buttoning up the pouch of his nether garment, as if to resist temptation, he pressed the poor hand still extended towards him, and bowing over it with a kind respect for which I did long to approach and kiss his most withered and undainty cheek, he turned quickly round, and almost fell against me in the abstracted hurry of his exit.

"Hush!" said I softly. "What hope of your patient?"

The leech glanced at me meaningly, and I whispered to him to wait for me below. Isora had not yet seen me. It is a notable distinction in the feelings, that all but the solitary one of grief sharpen into exquisite edge the keenness of the senses, but grief blunts them to a most dull obtuseness. I hesitated now to come forward; and so I stood, hat in hand, by the door, and not knowing that the tears streamed down my cheeks as I fixed my gaze upon Isora. She too stood still, just where the leech had left her, with her eyes fixed upon the ground, and her head drooping. The right hand which the man had pressed, had sunk slowly and heavily by her side, with the small snowy fingers half closed over the palm. There is no describing the despondency which the listless position of that hand spoke, and the left hand lay with a like indolence of sorrow on the table, with one finger outstretched and pointing towards the phials, just as it had, some moments before, seconded the injunctions of the prim physician. Well, for my part, if I were a painter I would come now and then to a sick chamber for a study!

At last Isora, with a very quiet gesture of self-recovery, moved towards the bed, and the next moment I was by her side. If my life depended on it, I could not write one, no, not *one* syllable more of this scene.

CHAPTER XI.

Containing more than any other Chapter in the Second Book of this History.

My first proposal was to remove the patient, with all due care and gentleness, to a better lodging, and a district more convenient for the visits of the most eminent physicians. When I expressed this wish to Isora, she looked at me long and wistfully, and then burst into tears. "*You* will not deceive us," said she, "and I accept your kindness at once—from *him* I rejected the same offer."

"Him?—of whom speak you?—this Barnard, or rather—but I know him!" A startling expression passed over Isora's speaking face.

"Know him!" she cried, interrupting me. "You do not—you cannot!"

"Take courage, dearest Isora—if I may so dare to call you—take courage; it is fearful to have a rival in that quarter—but I am prepared for it.—This Barnard, tell me again, do you love him?"

"Love—O God, no!"

"What then: do you still fear him?—fear

him, too, protected by the unsleeping eye, and the vigilant hand of a love like mine?"

"Yes!" she said falteringly, "I fear for *you!*"

"Me!" I cried, laughing scornfully, "me! nay, dearest, there breathes not that man whom you need fear on *my* account.—But, answer me—is not—"

"For Heaven's sake—for mercy's sake!" cried Isora eagerly, "do not question me—I may not tell you who, or what this man is—I am bound, by a most solemn oath, never to divulge that secret."

"I care not," said I, calmly, "I want no confirmation of my knowledge—this masked rival is my own brother!"

I fixed my eyes full on Isora while I said this, and she quailed beneath my gaze: her cheek—her lips—were utterly without color, and an expression of sickening and keen anguish was graven upon her face.—She made no answer.

"Yes!" resumed I, bitterly, "it is my brother—be it so—I am prepared—but if you can, Isora, say one word to deny it?"

Isora's tongue seemed literally to cleave to her mouth; at last, with a violent effort, she muttered, "I have told you, Morton, that I am bound by oath not to divulge this secret; nor may I breathe a single syllable calculated to do so—if I deny one name, you may question me on more—and, therefore, to deny one is a breach of my oath. But beware!" she added, vehemently, "oh! beware how your suspicious—mere vague, baseless suspicions—criminate a brother: and, above all, whomsoever you believe to be the real being under this disguised name, as you value your life, and therefore mine—breathe not to him a syllable of your belief."

I was so struck with the energy with which this was said, that, after a short pause, I rejoined in an altered tone.

"I cannot believe that I have aught against life to fear from a brother's hand—but I will promise you to guard against latent danger. But is your oath so peremptory that you cannot deny even one name?—if not, and you *can* deny this, I swear to you that I will never question you upon another."

Again a fierce convulsion wrung the lip and distorted the perfect features of Isora. She remained silent for some moments, and then murmured, "My oath forbids me even that single answer—tempt me no more—now, and for ever, I am mute upon this subject."

Perhaps some slight and momentary anger, or doubt, or suspicion, betrayed itself upon my countenance, for Isora, after looking upon me long and mournfully, said in a quiet, but melancholy tone, "I see your thoughts, and I do not reproach you for them—it is natural that you should think ill of one whom this mystery surrounds—one too placed under such circumstances of humiliation and distrust. I have lived long in your country—I have seen, for the last few months, much of its inhabitants; I have studied too the works which profess to unfold its national and peculiar character; I know that you have a distrust of the people of other climates; I know that you are cautious and full of suspicious vigilance, even in your commerce with each other; I know, too (and Isora's heart swelled visibly as she spoke), that poverty itself, in the eyes of your commercial countrymen, is a crime, and that they rarely feel confidence or place faith in those who are unhappy;—why, Count Devereux, why should I require more of you than of the rest of your nation? Why should you think better of the penniless and friendless girl—the degraded exile—the victim of doubt, which is so often the disguise of guilt, than any other—any one even among my own people—would think of one so mercilessly deprived of all the decent and appropriate barriers by which a maiden should be surrounded? No—no—leave me as you found me—leave my poor father where you see him—any place will do for us to die in."

"Isora!" I said, clasping her in my arms, "you do not know me yet; had I found you in prosperity, and in the world's honor—had I wooed you in your father's halls, and girt around with the friends and kinsmen of your race—I might have pressed for more than you will now tell me—I might have indulged suspicion where I perceived mystery, and I might not have loved as I love you now! *Now*, Isora, in misfortune, in destitution, I place without reserve my whole heart—its trust, its zeal, its devotion—in your keeping; come evil or good, storm or sunshine, I am yours, wholly, and for ever. Reject me if you will, I will return to you again; and never—never—save from my own eyes or your own lips—will I

receive a single evidence detracting from your purity, or, Isora—mine own, own Isora—may I not add also—from your love?"

"Too, too generous!" murmured Isora, struggling passionately with her tears, "may Heaven forsake me if ever I am ungrateful to thee; and believe—believe, that if love, more fond, more true, more devoted than woman ever felt before, can repay you, you shall be repaid!"

Why, at that moment, did my heart leap so joyously within me?—why did I say inly—"The treasure I have so long yearned for, is found at last: we have met, and through the waste of years, we will walk together, and never part again?" Why, at that moment of bliss, did I not rather feel a foretaste of the coming woe! Oh, blind and capricious Fate, that gives us a presentiment at one while, and withholds it at another! Knowledge, and Prudence, and calculating Foresight, what are ye?—warnings unto others, not ourselves. Reason is a lamp which sheddeth afar a glorious and general light, but leaveth all that is around it in darkness and in gloom. We foresee and foretell the destiny of others—we march credulous and benighted to our own; and, like Laocoön, from the very altars by which we stand as the soothsayer and the priest, creep forth, unsuspected and undreamt of, the serpents which are fated to destroy us!

That very day then, Alavarez was removed to a lodging more worthy of his birth, and more calculated to afford hope of his recovery. He bore the removal without any evident sign of fatigue; but his dreadful malady had taken away both speech and sense, and he was already more than half the property of the grave. I sent, however, for the best medical advice which London could afford. They met—prescribed—and left the patient just as they found him. I know not, in the progress of science, what physicians may be to posterity, but in my time they are false witnesses subpœnaed against Death, whose testimony always tells less in favor of the plaintiff than the defendant.

Before we left the poor Spaniard's former lodging, and when I was on the point of giving some instructions to the landlady respecting the place to which the few articles of property belonging to Diego and Isora were to be moved, Isora made me a sign to be silent, which I obeyed. "Pardon me," said she afterwards; "but I confess that I am anxious our next residence should not be known—should not be subject to the intrusion of—of this—"

"Barnard, as you call him. I understand you; be it so!" and accordingly I enjoined the goods to be sent to my own house, whence they were removed to Don Diego's new abode; and I took especial care to leave with the good lady no clue to discover Alvarez and his daughter, otherwise than *through me.* The pleasure afforded me of directing Gerald's attention to myself, I could not resist. "Tell Mr. Barnard, when he calls," said I, "that only through Count Morton Dervereux, will he hear of Don Diego D'Alvarez, and the lady his daughter."

"I will, your honor," said the landlady; and then looking at me more attentively, she added: "Bless me! now when you speak, there is a very strong likeness between yourself and Mr. Barnard."

I recoiled as if an adder had stung me, and hurried into the coach to support the patient, who was already placed there.

Now then my daily post was by the bed of disease and suffering; in the chamber of death was my vow of love ratified; and in sadness and in sorrow was it returned. But it is in such scenes that the deepest, the most endearing, and the most holy, species of the passion is engendered. As I heard Isora's low voice tremble with the suspense of one who watches over the hourly severing of the affection of Nature and of early years: as I saw her light step flit by the pillow which she smoothed, and her cheek alternately flush and fade, in watching the wants which she relieved; as I marked her mute, her unwearying, tenderness, breaking into a thousand nameless, but mighty, cares, and pervading like an angel's vigilance every—yea, the minutest—course into which it flowed—did I not behold her in that sphere in which woman is most lovely, and in which love itself consecrates its admiration, and purifies its most ardent desires? That was not a time for our hearts to speak audibly to each other; but we felt that they grew closer and closer, and we asked not for the poor eloquence of words. But over this scene let me not linger.

One morning, as I was proceeding on foot to Isora's, I perceived on the opposite side of the way Montreuil and Gerald; they were

conversing eagerly: they both saw me. Montreuil made a slight, quiet, and dignified inclination of the head: Gerald colored, and hesitated. I thought he was about to leave his companion and address me; but, with a haughty and severe air, I passed on, and Gerald, as if stung by my demeanor, bit his lip vehemently, and followed my example. A few minutes afterwards I felt an inclination to regret that I had not afforded him an opportunity of addressing me. "I might," thought I, "have then taunted him with his persecution of Isora, and defied him to execute those threats against me, in which it is evident, from her apprehensions for my safety, that he indulged."

I had not, however, much leisure for these thoughts. When I arrived at the lodgings of Alvarez, I found that a great change had taken place in his condition; he had recovered speech, though imperfectly, and testified a return to sense. I flew upstairs with a light step to congratulate Isora: she met me at the door. "Hush!" she whispered: "my father sleeps!" But she did not speak with the animation I had anticipated.

"What is the matter, dearest?" said I, following her into another apartment; "you seem sad, and your eyes are red with tears, which are not, methinks, entirely the tears of joy at this happy change in your father?"

"I am marked out for suffering," returned Isora, more keenly than she was wont to speak. I pressed her to explain her meaning; she hesitated at first, but at length confessed that her father had always been anxious for her marriage with this *soi-disant* Barnard, and that his first words on his recovery had been to press her to consent to his wishes.

"My poor father," said she, weepingly, "speaks and thinks only for my fancied good; but his senses as yet are only recovered in part, and he cannot even understand me when I speak of you. 'I shall die,' he said, 'I shall die, and you will be left on the wide world?' I in vain endeavored to explain to him that I should have a protector—he fell asleep muttering those words, and with tears in his eyes."

"Does he know as much of this Barnard as you do?" said I.

"Heavens, no!—or he would never have pressed me to marry one so wicked."

"Does he know even who he is?"

"Yes!" said Isora, after a pause, "but he has not known it long."

Here the physician joined us, and taking me aside, informed me that, as he had foreboded, sleep had been the harbinger of death, and that Don Diego was no more. I broke the news as gently as I could to Isora: but her grief was far more violent than I could have anticipated: and nothing seemed to cut her so deeply to the heart as the thought that his last wish had been one with which she had not complied, and could never comply.

I pass over the first days of mourning—I come to the one after Don Diego's funeral. I had been with Isora in the morning; I left her for a few hours, and returned at the first dusk of evening with some books and music, which I vainly hoped she might recur to for a momentary abstraction from her grief. I dismissed my carriage, with the intention of walking home, and addressing the woman-servant who admitted me, inquired, as was my wont, after Isora. "She has been very ill," replied the woman, "ever since the strange gentleman left her."

"The strange gentleman?"

Yes, he had forced his way upstairs, despite of the denial the servant had been ordered to give to all strangers. He had entered Isora's room; and the woman, in answer to my urgent inquiries, added that she had heard his voice raised to a loud and harsh key in the apartment; he had stayed there about a quarter of an hour, and had then hurried out, seemingly in great disorder and agitation.

"What description of man was he?" I asked.

The woman answered that he was mantled from head to foot in his cloak, which was richly laced, and his hat was looped with diamonds, but slouched over that part of his face which the collar of his cloak did not hide, so that she could not further describe him than as one of a haughty and abrupt bearing, and evidently belonging to the higher ranks.

Convinced that Gerald had been the intruder, I hastened up the stairs to Isora. She received me with a sickly and faint smile, and endeavored to conceal the traces of her tears.

"So!" said I, "this insolent persecutor of yours has discovered your abode, and again insulted or intimidated you. He shall do so no more!—I will seek him to-morrow—and no affinity of blood shall prevent—"

"Morton, dear Morton!" cried Isora, in great alarm, and yet with a certain determination stamped upon her features, "hear me!—it is true this man has been here—it is true that, fearful and terrible as he is, he has agitated and alarmed me; but it was only for you, Morton—by the Holy Virgin, it was only for you! 'The moment,' said he, and his voice ran shiveringly through my heart like a dagger, 'the moment Morton Devereux discovers who is his rival, that moment his death warrant is irrevocably sealed!'"

"Arrogant boaster!" I cried, and my blood burnt with the intense rage which a much slighter cause would have kindled from the natural fierceness of my temper. "Does he think my life is at his bidding, to allow or to withhold?—Unhand me, Isora, unhand me! I tell you I will seek him this moment, and dare him to do his worst!"

"Do so," said Isora, calmly, and releasing her hold; "do so; but hear me first: the moment you breathe to him your suspicions you place an eternal barrier betwixt yourself and me! Pledge me your faith that you will never, while I live at least, reveal to him—to any one—whom you suspect—your reproach, your defiance, your knowledge—nay, not even your lightest suspicion of his identity with my persecutor—promise me this, Morton Devereux, or I, in my turn, before that crucifix, whose sanctity we both acknowledge and adore—that crucifix which has descended to my race for three unbroken centuries—which, for my departed Father, in the solemn vow, and in the death agony, has still been a witness, a consolation, and a pledge, between the soul and its Creator—by that crucifix which my dying mother clasped to her bosom, when she committed me, an infant, to the care of that Heaven which hears and records for ever our lightest word—I swear that I will never be yours!"

"Isora!" said I, awed and startled, yet struggling against the impression her energy made upon me, "you know not to what you pledge yourself, nor what you require of me. If I do not seek out this man—if I do not expose to him my knowledge of his pursuit and unhallowed persecution of you—if I do not effectually prohibit and prevent their continuance—think well, what security have I for your future peace of mind—nay, even for the safety of your honor or your life? A man thus bold, daring, and unbaffled in his pursuit, thus vigilant and skilful in his selection of time and occasion—so that, despite my constant and anxious endeavor to meet him in your presence, I have never been able to do so—from a man, I say, thus pertinacious in resolution, thus crafty in disguise, what may you not dread when you leave him utterly fearless by the license of impunity? Think too, again, Isora, that the mystery dishonors as much as the danger menaces. Is it meet that my betrothed and my future bride should be subjected to these secret and terrible visitations—visitations of a man professing himself her lover, and evincing the vehemence of his passion by that of his pursuit? Isora—Isora—you have weighed not these things—you know not what you demand of me."

"I do!" answered Isora, "I do know all that I demand of you—I demand of you only to preserve your life."

"How," said I, impatiently, "cannot my hand preserve my life? and is it for you, the daughter of a line of warriors, to ask your lover and your husband to shrink from a single foe?"

"No, Morton," answered Isora. "Were you going to battle, I would gird on your sword myself—were, too, this man other than he is, and you were about to meet him in open contest, I would not wrong you, nor degrade your betrothed, by a fear. But I know my persecutor well—fierce, unrelenting—dreadful in his dark and ungovernable passions as he is, he has not the courage to confront you: I fear not the open foe, but the lurking and sure assassin. His very earnestness to avoid you; the precautions he has taken—are alone sufficient to convince you that he dreads personally to oppose your claim, or to vindicate himself."

"Then what have I to fear?"

"Everything! Do you not know that from men, at once fierce, crafty, and shrinking from bold violence, the stuff for assassins is always made? And if I wanted surer proof of his designs than inference, his oath—it rings in my ears now—is sufficient: 'The moment Morton Devereux discovers who is his rival, that moment his death-warrant is irrevocably sealed.' Morton, I demand your promise; or, though my heart break, I will record my own vow."

"Stay—stay," I said, in anger, and in sor-

row: "were I to promise this, and for my own safety hazard yours, what could you deem me?"

"Fear not for me, Morton," answered Isora; "you have no cause. I tell you that this man, villain as he is, ever leaves me humbled and abased. Do not think that in all times and all scenes, I am the foolish and weak creature you behold me now. Remember, that you said rightly I was the daughter of a line of warriors; and I have that within me which will not shame my descent."

"But, dearest, your resolution may avail you for a time; but it cannot for ever baffle the hardened nature of a man. I know my own sex, and I know my own ferocity, were it once aroused."

"But, Morton, you do not know *me*," said Isora, proudly, and her face, as she spoke, was set, and even stern, "I am only the coward when I think of you; a word—a look of mine—can abash this man; or, if it could not, I am never without a weapon to defend myself, or—or——" Isora's voice, before firm and collected, now faltered, and a deep blush flowed over the marble paleness of her face.

"Or what?" said I, anxiously.

"Or thee, Morton?" murmured Isora, tenderly, and withdrawing her eyes from mine.

The tone, the look that accompanied these words, melted me at once. I rose—I clasped Isora to my heart—

"You are a strange compond, my own fairy queen; but these lips—this cheek—those eyes—are not fit features for a heroine."

"Morton, if I had less determination in my heart, I could not love you so well."

"But tell me," I whispered, with a smile, "where is this weapon on which you rely so strongly?"

"Here!" answered Isora, blushingly; and, extricating herself from me, she showed me a small two-edged dagger, which she wore carefully concealed within the folds of her dress. I looked over the bright, keen blade, with surprise, and yet with pleasure, at the latent resolution of a character seemingly so soft. I say, with pleasure, for it suited well with my own fierce and wild temper. I returned the weapon to her, with a smile and a jest.

"Ah!" said Isora, shrinking from my kiss, "I should not have been so bold, if I only feared danger for myself."

But if, for a moment, we forgot, in the gushings of our affection, the object of our converse and dispute, we soon returned to it again. Isora was the first to recur to it. She reminded me of the promise she required; and she spoke with a seriousness and a solemnity which I found myself scarcely able to resist.

"But," I said, "if he ever molest you hereafter: if again I find that bright cheek blanched, and those dear eyes dimmed with tears, and I know that, in my own house, some one has dared thus to insult its queen, am I to be still torpid and inactive, lest a dastard and craven hand should avenge my assertion of your honor and mine?"

"No, Morton; after our marriage, whenever that be, you will have nothing to apprehend from him on the same ground as before; my fear for you, too, will not be what it is now; your honor will be bound in mine, and nothing shall induce me to hazard it—no, not even your safety. I have every reason to believe that, after that event, he will subject me no longer to his insults—how, indeed, can he, under your perpetual protection? or, for what cause should he attempt it, if he could? I shall be then yours—only and ever yours—what hope could, therefore, then nerve his hardihood or instigate his intrusions? Trust to me at that time, and suffer me to—nay, I repeat, promise me that I may—trust in you now!"

What could I do? I still combated her wish and her request; but her steadiness and rigidity of purpose made me, though reluctantly, yield to them at last. So sincere, and so stern, indeed, appeared her resolution, that I feared, by refusal, that she would take the rash oath that would separate us for ever. Added to this, I felt in her that confidence which, I am apt to believe, is far more akin to the latter stages of real love, than jealousy and mistrust; and I could not believe that either now, or, still less after our nuptials, she would risk aught of honor, or the seemings of honor, from a visionary and superstitious fear. In spite, therefore, of my keen and deep interest in the thorough discovery of this mysterious persecutor; and, still more, in the prevention of all future designs from his audacity, I constrained myself to promise her that I would on no account seek out the person I suspected, or wilfully betray to him, by word or deed, my belief of his identity with Barnard.

Though greatly dissatisfied with my self-

compulsion, I strove to reconcile myself to its idea. Indeed, there was much in the peculiar circumstauces of Isora—much in the freshness of her present affliction—much in the unfriended and utter destitution of her situation—that, while, on the one hand, it called forth her pride, and made stubborn that temper which was naturally so gentle and so soft, on the other hand, made me yield even to wishes that I thought unreasonable, and consider rather the delicacy and deference due to her condition, than insist upon the sacrifices which, in more fortunate circumstances, I might have imagined due to myself. Still more indisposed to resist her wish and expose myself to its penalty was I, when I considered her desire was the mere excess and caution of her love, and when I felt that she spoke sincerely when she declared that it was only for me that she was the coward. Nevertheless, and despite all these considerations, it was with a secret discontent that I took my leave of her, and departed homeward.

I had just reached the end of the street where the house was situated, when I saw there, very imperfectly, for the night was extremely dark, the figure of a man entirely enveloped in a long cloak, such as was commonly worn by gallants, in affairs of secrecy or intrigue; and, in the pale light of a single lamp near which he stood, something like the brilliance of gems glittered on the large Spanish hat which overhung his brow. I immediately recalled the description the woman had given me of Barnard's dress, and the thought flashed across me that it was he whom I beheld. "At all events," thought I, "I may confirm my doubts, if I may not communicate them, and I may watch over her safety if I may not avenge her injuries?" I therefore took advantage of my knowledge of the neighborhood, passed the stranger with a quick step, and then, running rapidly, returned by a circuitous route to the mouth of a narrow and dark street, which was exactly opposite to Isora's house. Here I concealed myself by a projecting porch, and I had not waited long before I saw the dim form of the stranger walk slowly by the house. He passed it three or four times, and each time I thought—though the darkness might well deceive me—that he looked up to the windows. He made, however, no attempt at admission, and appeared as if he had no other object than that of watching by the house. Wearied and impatient at last, I came from my concealment. "I may *confirm* my suspicions," I repeated, recurring to my oath, and I walked straight towards the stranger.

"Sir!" I said, very calmly, "I am the last person in the world to interfere with the amusements of any other gentleman; but I humbly opine that no man can parade by this house upon so very cold a night, without giving just ground for suspicion to the friends of its inhabitants. I happen to be among that happy number; and I therefore, with all due humility and respect, venture to request you to seek some other spot for your nocturnal perambulations."

I made this speech purposely prolix, in order to have time fully to reconnoitre the person of the one I addressed. The dusk of the night, and the loose garb of the stranger, certainly forbade any decided success to this scrutiny; but methought the figure seemed, despite of my prepossessions, to want the stately height and grand proportions of Gerald Devereux. I must own, however, that the necessary inexactitude of my survey rendered this idea without just foundation, and did not by any means diminish my firm impression that it was Gerald whom I beheld. While I spoke, he retreated with a quick step, but made no answer; I pressed upon him—he backed with a still quicker step; and when I had ended, he fairly turned round, and made at full speed along the dark street in which I had fixed my previous post of watch. I fled after him, with a step as fleet as his own—his cloak encumbered his flight—I gained upon him sensibly—he turned a sharp corner—threw me out, and entered into a broad thoroughfare. As I sped after him, Bacchanalian voices burst upon my ear, and presently a large band of those young men who, under the name of Mohawks, were wont to scour the town nightly, and, sword in hand, to exercise their love of riot under the disguise of party zeal, became visible in the middle of the street. Through them my fugitive dashed headlong, and, profiting by their surprise, escaped unmolested. I attempted to follow with equal speed, but was less successful. "Hallo!" cried the foremost of the group, placing himself in my way.

"No such haste! Art Whig or Tory? Under which king—Bezonian, speak or die?"

"Have a care, sir," said I fiercely, drawing my sword.

"Treason, treason!" cried the speaker, confronting me, with equal readiness. "Have a care, indeed—have *at thee.*"

"Ha!" cried another, "'tis a Tory: 'tis the Secretary's Popish friend, Devereux—pike him, pike him."

I had already run my opponent through the sword arm, and was in hopes that this act would intimidate the rest, and allow my escape; but at the sound of my name and political bias, coupled with the drawn blood of their confederate, the patriots rushed upon me with that amiable fury generally characteristic of all true lovers of their country. Two swords passed through my body simultaneously, and I fell bleeding and insensible to the ground. When I recovered I was in my own apartments, whither two of the gentler Mohawks had conveyed me; the surgeons were by my bed-side; I groaned audibly when I saw them. If there is a thing in the world I hate, it is in any shape the disciples of Hermes; they always remind me of that Indian people (the Padæi, I think) mentioned by Herodotus, who sustained themselves by devouring the sick. "All is well," said one, when my groan was heard. "He will not die," said another. "At least not till we have had more fees," said a third, more candid than the rest. And thereupon they seized me and began torturing my wounds anew, till I fainted away with the pain. However, the next day I was declared out of immediate danger; and the first proof I gave of my convalescence was to make Desmarais discharge four surgeons out of five: the remaining one I thought my youth and constitution might enable me to endure.

That very evening, as I was turning restlessly in my bed, and muttering, with parched lips, the name of "Isora," I saw by my side a figure covered from head to foot in a long veil, and a voice, low, soft, but thrilling through my heart like a new existence, murmured, "She is here!"

I forgot my wounds, I forgot my pain and my debility—I sprung upwards—the stranger drew aside the veil from her countenance, and I beheld Isora!

"Yes!" said she, in her own liquid and honied accents, which fell like balm upon my wound, and my spirit, "yes, she whom *you* have hitherto tended is come, in her turn, to render some slight, but woman's services to you. She has come to nurse, and to soothe, and to pray for you, and to be, till you yourself discard her, your handmaid and your slave!"

I would have answered, but raising her finger to her lips, she arose and vanished; but from that hour my wound healed, my fever slaked, and whenever I beheld her flitting round my bed, or watching over me, or felt her cool fingers wiping the dew from my brow, or took from her hand my medicine, or my food, in those moments, the blood seemed to make a new struggle through my veins, and I felt palpably within me a fresh and delicious life—a life full of youth, and passion, and hope, replace the vaguer and duller being which I had hitherto borne.

There are some extraordinary incongruities in that very mysterious thing *sympathy.* One would imagine that, in a description of things most generally interesting to all men, the most general interest would be found; nevertheless, I believe few persons would hang breathless over the progressive history of a sick-bed. Yet those gradual stages from danger to recovery, how delightfully interesting they are to all who have crawled from one to the other! and who, at some time or other in his journey through that land of diseases—civilized life—has not taken that gentle excursion? "I would be ill any day for the pleasure of getting well," said Fontenelle to me one morning with his usual *naïveté;* but who would not be ill for the mere pleasure of being ill, if he could be tended by her whom he most loves?

I shall not therefore dwell upon that most delicious period of my life—my sick-bed, and my recovery from it. I pass on to a certain evening in which I heard from Isora's lips the whole of her history, save what related to her knowledge of the real name of one whose persecution constituted the little of romance which had yet mingled with her innocent and pure life. That evening—how well I remember it! we were alone—still weak and reduced, I lay upon the sofa beside the window, which was partially open, and the still air of an evening in the first infancy of spring, came fresh, and fraught, as it were, with a prediction of the glowing woods, and the reviving verdure, to my cheek. The stars, one by one, kindled, as if born of Heaven and Twilight,

into their nightly being; and, through the vapor and thick ether of the dense city, streamed their most silent light, holy and pure, and resembling that which the Divine Mercy sheds upon the gross nature of mankind. But, shadowy and calm, their rays fell full upon the face of Isora, as she lay on the ground beside my couch, and with one hand surrendered to my clasp, looked upward till, as she felt my gaze, she turned her cheek blushingly away. There was quiet around and above us; but beneath the window we heard at times the sounds of the common earth, and then insensibly our hands knit into a closer clasp, and we felt them thrill more palpably to our hearts; for those sounds reminded us both of our existence and of our separation from the great herd of our race!

What is love but a division from the world, and a blending of two souls, two immortalities divested of clay and ashes, into one? it is a severing of a thousand ties from whatever is harsh and selfish, in order to knit them into a single and sacred bond! Who loves, hath attained the anchorite's secret; and the hermitage has become dearer than the world. O respite from the toil and the curse of our social and banded state, a little interval art thou, suspended between two eternities—the Past and the Future—a star that hovers between the morning and the night, sending through the vast abyss one solitary ray from heaven, but too far and faint to illumine, while it hallows the earth!

There was nothing in Isora's tale which the reader has not already learnt or conjectured. She had left her Andalusian home in her early childhood, but she remembered it well, and lingeringly dwelt over it, in description. It was evident that little, in our colder and less genial isle, had attracted her sympathy, or wound itself into her affection. Nevertheless, I conceive that her naturally dreamy and abstracted character had received from her residence and her trials here much of the vigor and the heroism which it now possessed. Brought up alone, music, and books—few, though not ill-chosen, for Shakspeare was one, and the one which had made upon her the most permanent impression, and perhaps had colored her temperament with its latent, but rich hues of poetry—constituted her amusement and her studies.

But who knows not that a woman's heart finds its fullest occupation within itself? There lies its real study, and within that narrow orbit, the mirror of enchanted thought reflects the whole range of earth. Loneliness and meditation nursed the mood which afterwards, with Isora, became love itself. But I do not wish now so much to describe her character, as to abridge her brief history. The first English stranger, of the male sex, whom her father admitted to her acquaintance, was Barnard. This man was, as I had surmised, connected with him in certain political intrigues, the exact nature of which she did not know. I continue to call him by a name which Isora acknowledged was fictitious. He had not, at first, by actual declaration, betrayed to her his affections: though, accompanied by a sort of fierceness which early revolted her, they soon became visible. On the evening in which I had found her stretched insensible in the garden, and had myself made my first confession of love, I learnt that he had divulged to her his passion and real name; that her rejection had thrown him into a fierce despair—that he had accompanied his disclosure with the most terrible threats against me, for whom he supposed himself rejected, and against the safety of her father, whom he said a word of his could betray; that her knowledge of his power to injure us! *us*—yes, Isora then loved me, and then trembled for my safety!—had terrified and overcome her—and that in the very moment in which my horse's hoofs were heard, and as the alternative of her non-compliance, the rude suitor swore deadly and sore vengeance against Alvarez and myself, she yielded to the oath he prescribed to her—an oath that she would never reveal the secret he had betrayed to her, or suffer me to know who was my real rival.

This was all that I could gather from her guarded confidence! he heard the oath, and vanished, and she felt no more till she was in my arms; then it was that she saw in the love and vengeance of my rival a barrier against our union; and then it was that her generous fear for me conquered her attachment, and she renounced me. Their departure from the cottage, so shortly afterwards, was at her father's choice and at the instigation of Barnard, for the furtherance of their political projects; and it was from Barnard that the

money came which repaid my loan to Alvarez. The same person, no doubt, poisoned her father against me, for henceforth Alvarez never spoke of me with that partiality he had previously felt. They repaired to London; her father was often absent, and often engaged with men whom she had never seen before! he was absorbed and uncommunicative, and she was still ignorant of the nature of his schemings and designs.

At length, after an absence of several weeks, Barnard re-appeared, and his visits became constant; he renewed his suit to her father as well as herself. Then commenced that domestic persecution, so common in this very tyrannical world, which makes us sicken to bear, and which, had Isora been wholly a Spanish girl, she, in all probability, would never have resisted: so much of custom is there in the very air of a climate. But she did resist it, partly because she loved me—and loved me more and more for our separation—and partly because she dreaded and abhorred the ferocious and malignant passions of my rival, far beyond any other misery with which fortune could threaten her. "Your father then shall hang or starve!" said Barnard, one day in uncontrollable frenzy, and left her. He did not appear again at the house. The Spaniard's resources, fed, probably, alone by Barnard, failed. From house to house they removed, till they were reduced to that humble one in which I had found them. There, Barnard again sought them; there, backed by the powerful advocate of want, he again pressed his suit, and at that exact moment her father was struck with the numbing curse of his disease. "There and then," said Isora candidly, "I might have yielded at last, for my poor father's sake, if you had not saved me."

Once only (I have before recorded the time), did Barnard visit her in the new abode I had provided for her, and the day after our conversation on that event Isora watched and watched for me, and I did not come. From the woman of the house she at last learned the cause. "I forgot," she said timidly—and in conclusion, "I forgot womanhood, and modesty, and reserve; I forgot the customs of your country, the decencies of my own; I forgot everything in this world, but you—you suffering and in danger; my very sense of existence seemed to pass from me, and to be supplied by a breathless, confused, and overwhelming sense of impatient agony, which ceased not till I was in your chamber, and by your side! And—and now, Morton, do not despise me for not having considered more, and loved you less."

"Despise you!" I murmured, and I threw my arms around her, and drew her to my breast. I felt her heart beat against my own: those hearts spoke, though our lips were silent, and in their language seemed to say: "We are united now, and we will not part."

The starlight, shining with a mellow and deep stillness, was the only light by which we beheld each other—it shone, the witness and the sanction of that internal voice, which we owned, but heard not. Our lips drew closer and closer together, till they met! and in that kiss was the type and promise of the after ritual which knit two spirits into one. Silence fell around us like a curtain, and the eternal Night, with her fresh dews and unclouded stars, looked alone upon the compact of our hearts—an emblem of the eternity, the freshness, and the unearthly, though awful brightness of the love which it hallowed and beheld!

BOOK THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

Wherein the History makes great Progress, and is marked by one important Event in Human Life.

SPINOSA is said to have loved, above all other amusements, to put flies into a spider's web; and the struggles of the imprisoned insects were wont to bear, in the eyes of this grave philosopher, so facetious and hilarious an appearance, that he would stand and laugh thereat until the tears "coursed one another down his innocent nose." Now it so happeneth that Spinosa, despite the general (and, in my most meek opinion, the just) condemnation of his theoretical tenets,* was in character and in nature, according to the voices of all who knew him, an exceedingly kind, humane, and benevolent biped; and it doth, therefore, seem a little strange unto us grave, sober members of the unphilosophical Many, that the struggles and terrors of these little, winged creatures should strike the good subtleist in a point of view so irresistibly ludicrous and delightful. But, for my part, I believe that that most imaginative and wild speculator beheld in the entangled flies nothing more than a living simile—an animated illustration—of his own beloved vision of Necessity; and that he is no more to be considered cruel for the complacency with which he gazed upon those agonized types of his system than is Lucan for dwelling, with a poet's pleasure, upon the many ingenious ways with which that Grand Inquisitor of Verse has contrived to vary the simple operation of dying. To the bard, the butchered soldier was only an epic ornament; to the philosopher, the murdered fly was only a metaphysical illustration. For, without being a Fatalist, or a disciple of Baruch de Spinosa, I must confess that I cannot conceive a greater resemblance to our human and earthly state than the penal predicament of the devoted flies. Suddenly do we find ourselves plunged into that Vast Web —the world; and even as the insect, when he first undergoeth a similar accident of necessity, standeth amazed and still, and only, by little and little, awakeneth to a full sense of his situation; so also at the first abashed and confounded, we remain on the mesh we are urged upon, ignorant, as yet, of the toils around us, and the sly, dark, immitigable foe, that lieth in yonder noon, already feasting her imagination upon our destruction. Presently we revive—we stir—we flutter—and Fate, that foe —the old arch-spider, that hath no moderation in her maw—now fixeth one of her many eyes upon us, and giveth us a partial glimpse of her laidly and grim aspect. We pause in mute terror—we gaze upon the ugly spectre, so imperfectly beheld — the net ceases to tremble, and the wily enemy draws gently back into her nook. Now we begin to breathe again—we sound the strange footing on which we tread—we move tenderly along it, and again the griesly monster advances on us; again we pause — the foe retires not, but remains still, and surveyeth us; —we see every step is accompanied with danger—we look round and above in despair—suddenly we feel within us a new impulse and a new power !—we feel a vague sympathy with *that* unknown region which spreads *beyond* this great net;—*that limitless beyond* hath a mystic affinity with a part of our own frame—we unconsciously extend our wings (for the soul to us is as the wings to the fly !)—we attempt

* One ought, however, to be very cautious before one condemns a philosopher. The master's opinions are generally pure—it is the conclusions and corollaries of his disciples that "draw the honey forth that drives men mad." Schlegel seems to have studied Spinosa *de fonte*, and vindicates him very earnestly from the charges brought against him—atheism, etc.—ED.

to rise—to soar above this perilous snare, from which we are unable to crawl. The old spider watcheth us in self-hugging quiet, and, looking up to our native air, we think—now shall we escape thee.—Out on it! We rise not a hair's breadth—we have the *wings*, it is true, but the *feet* are fettered. We strive desperately again—the whole web vibrates with the effort—it will break beneath our strength. Not a jot of it!—we cease—we are more entangled than ever! wings—feet—frame—the foul slime is over all!—where shall we turn? every line of the web leads to the one den,—we know not—we care not—we grow blind—confused—lost. The eyes of our hideous foe gloat upon us—she whetteth her insatiate maw—she leapeth towards us—she fixeth her fangs upon us—and so endeth my parallel!

But what has this to do with my tale? Ay, Reader, that is thy question; and I will answer it by one of mine. When thou hearest a man moralize and preach of Fate, art thou not sure that he is going to tell thee of some one of his peculiar misfortunes? Sorrow loves a parable as much as mirth loves a jest. And thus already and from afar, I prepare thee, at the commencement of this, the third of these portions into which the history of my various and wild life will be divided, for that event with which I purpose that the said portion shall be concluded.

It is now three months after my entire recovery from my wounds, and I am married to Isora!—married—yes, but *privately* married, and the ceremony is as yet closely concealed. I will explain.

The moment Isora's anxiety for me led her across the threshold of my house it became necessary for her honor that our wedding should take place immediately on my recovery—so far I was decided on the measure—now for the method. During my illness, I received a long and most affectionate letter from Aubrey, who was then at Devereux Court,—*so* affectionate was the heart-breathing spirit of that letter—so steeped in all our old household remembrances and boyish feelings, that, coupled as it was with a certain gloom when he spoke of himself and of worldly sins and trials, it brought tears to my eyes whenever I recurred to it;—and many and many a time afterwards, when I thought his affections seemed estranged from me, I did recur to it to convince myself that I was mistaken. Shortly afterwards I received also a brief epistle from my uncle, it was as kind as usual, and it mentioned Aubrey's return to Devereux Court: "That unhappy boy," said Sir William, "is more than ever devoted to his religious duties; nor do I believe that any priest-ridden poor devil, in the dark ages, ever made such use of the scourge and the penance."

Now, I have before stated that my uncle would, I knew, be averse to my intended marriage; and on hearing that Aubrey was then with him, I resolved, in replying to his letter, to entreat the former to sound Sir William on the subject I had most at heart, and ascertain the exact nature and extent of the opposition I should have to encounter in the step I was resolved to take. By the same post I wrote to the good old knight in as artful a strain as I was able, dwelling at some length upon my passion, upon the high birth, as well as the numerous good qualities of the object, but mentioning not her name; and I added everything that I thought likely to enlist my uncle's kind and warm feelings on my behalf. These letters produced the following ones:

FROM SIR WILLIAM DEVEREUX.

"'SDEATH! nephew Morton—but I won't scold thee, though thou deservest it. Let me see, thou art now scarce twenty, and thou talkest of marriage, which is the exclusive business of middle age, as familiarly as 'girls of thirteen do of puppy dogs.' Marry!—go hang thyself rather. Marriage, my dear boy, is at the best a treacherous proceeding: and a friend—a true friend will never counsel another to adopt it rashly. Look you—I have had experience in these matters: and, I think, the moment a woman is wedded some terrible revolution happens in her system; all her former good qualities vanish, *hey presto*, like eggs out of a conjuror's box,—'tis true they appear on t'other side of the box, the side turned to other people, but for the poor husband they are gone for ever. Od'sfish, Morton, go to! I tell thee again that I have had experience in these matters, which thou never hast had, clever as thou thinkest thyself. If now it were a good marriage thou wert about to make—if thou wert going to wed power, and money, and places at Court, why, something might be said for thee. As it is, there is no excuse—none. And I am astonished how a boy of thy sense could think of such nonsense. Birth, Morton, what the devil does that signify, so long as it is birth in another country? A foreign damsel, and a Spanish girl, too, above all others! 'Sdeath, man, as if there was not quicksilver enough in the English women for you, you must make a mercurial exportation from Spain, must you! Why, Morton—Morton, the ladies in that country are proverbial. I tremble at the very thought of it. But as for my consent, I never will give it—never; and though I threaten thee not with disinheritance and such like, yet I do ask something in return for the

great affection I have always borne thee; and I make no doubt that thou wilt readily oblige me in such a trifle as giving up a mere Spanish donna. So think of her no more. If thou wantest to make love, there are ladies in plenty whom thou needest not to marry. And for my part, I thought that thou wert all in all with the Lady Hasselton—Heaven bless her pretty face! Now don't think I want to scold thee—and don't think thine old uncle harsh—God knows he is not; but my dear, dear boy, this is quite out of the question, and thou must let me hear no more about it. The gout cripples me so that I must leave off. Ever thine own old uncle, "WILLIAM DEVEREUX."

"P.S. Upon consideration, I think, my dear boy, that thou must want money, and thou art ever too sparing. Messrs. Child, or my goldsmiths in Aldersgate, have my orders to pay to thy hand's-writing whatever thou mayst desire; and I do hope that thou wilt now want nothing to make thee merry withal. Why dost thou not write a comedy? is it not the mode still?"

LETTER FROM AUBREY DEVEREUX.

"I HAVE sounded my uncle, dearest Morton, according to your wishes; and I grieve to say that I have found him inexorable. He was very much hurt by your letter to him, and declared he should write to you forthwith upon the subject. I represented to him all that you have said upon the virtues of your intended bride; and I also insisted upon your clear judgment and strong sense upon most points, being a sufficient surety for your prudence upon this. But you know the libertine opinions, and the depreciating judgment of women, entertained by my poor uncle; and he would, I believe, have been less displeased with the heinous crime of an illicit connection, than the amiable weakness of an imprudent marriage—I might say of any marriage until it was time to provide heirs to the estate."

Here Aubrey, in the most affectionate and earnest manner, broke off, to point out to me the extreme danger to my interests that it would be to disoblige my uncle; who, despite his general kindness, would, upon a disagreement on so tender a matter as his sore point, and his most cherished hobby, consider my disobedience as a personal affront. He also recalled to me all that my uncle had felt and done for me; and insisted, at all events, upon the absolute duty of my delaying, even though I should not break off, the intended measure. Upon these points he enlarged much and eloquently; and this part of his letter certainly left no cheering or comfortable impression upon my mind.

Now my good uncle knew as much of love, as L. Mummius did of the fine arts,* and it was impossible to persuade him that if one wanted to indulge the tender passion, one woman would not do exactly as well as another, provided she were equally pretty. I knew therefore that he was incapable, on the one hand, of understanding my love for Isora, or, on the other, of acknowledging her claims upon me. I had not, of course, mentioned to him the generous imprudence which, on the news of my wound, had brought Isora to my house: for if I had done so, my uncle, with the eye of a courtier of Charles II., would only have seen the advantage to be derived from the impropriety, not the gratitude due to the devotion; neither had I mentioned this circumstance to Aubrey,—it seemed to me too delicate for any written communication; and therefore, in his advice to delay my marriage, he was unaware of the necessity which rendered the advice unavailing.

Now then was I in this dilemma, either to marry, and that *instanter*, and so, seemingly, with the most hasty and the most insolent indecorum, incense, wound, and in his interpretation of the act, contemn one whom I loved as I loved my uncle,—or, to delay the marriage, to separate from Isora, and to leave my future wife to the malignant consequences that would necessarily be drawn from a sojourn of weeks in my house. This fact there was no chance of concealing; servants have more tongues than Argus had eyes, and my youthful extravagance had filled my whole house with those pests of society. The latter measure was impossible, the former was most painful. Was there no third way?—there was that of a private marriage. This obviated not every evil; but it removed many: it satisfied my impatient love, it placed Isora under a sure protection, it secured and established her honor the moment the ceremony should be declared, and it avoided the seeming ingratitude and indelicacy of disobeying my uncle, without an effort of patience to appease him. I should have time and occasion then, I thought, for soothing and persuading him, and ultimately winning that consent which I firmly trusted I should sooner or later extract from his kindness of heart.

That some objections existed to this mediatory plan, was true enough: those objections related to Isora rather than to myself, and she was the first, on my hinting at the proposal, to

* A Roman consul, who, removing the most celebrated remains of Grecian antiquity to Rome, assured the persons charged with conveying them that if they injured any, they should make others to replace them.

overcome its difficulties. The leading feature in Isora's character was generosity; and, in truth, I know not a quality more dangerous, either to man or woman. Herself was invariably the last human being whom she seemed to consider: and no sooner did she ascertain what measure was the most prudent for me to adopt, than it immediately became that upon which she insisted. Would it have been possible for me—man of pleasure and of the world as I was thought to be—no, my good uncle, though it went to my heart to wound thee so secretly—it would *not* have been possible for me, even if I had not coined my whole nature into love: even if Isora had not been to me, what one smile of Isora's really was—it would not have been possible to have sacrificed so noble and so divine a heart, and made myself, in that sacrifice, a wretch for ever. No, my good uncle, I could not have made that surrender to thy reason, much less to thy prejudices. But if I have not done great injustice to the knight's character, I doubt whether even the youngest reader will not forgive him for a want of sympathy with one feeling, when they consider how susceptible that charming old man was to all others.

And herewith I could discourse most excellent wisdom upon that most mysterios passion of love. I could show, by tracing its causes, and its inseparable connection with the imagination, that it is only in certain states of society, as well as in certain periods of life, that love—real, pure, high love can be born. Yea, I could prove, to the nicety of a very problem, that, in the court of Charles II., it would have been as impossible for such a feeling to find root, as it would be for myrtle trees to efflorescence from a Duvillier periwig. And we are not to expect a man, however tender and affectionate he may be, to sympathize with that sentiment in another, which, from the accidents of birth and position, nothing short of a miracle could ever have produced in himself.

We were married then in private by a catholic priest. St. John, and one old lady who had been my father's godmother—for I wished for a female assistant in the ceremony, and this old lady could tell no secrets, for, being excessively deaf, no body ever talked to her, and indeed she scarcely ever went abroad—were the sole witnesses. I took a small house in the immediate neighborhood of London; it was surrounded on all sides with a high wall which defied alike curiosity and attack. This was, indeed, the sole reason which had induced me to prefer it to many more gaudy or more graceful dwellings. But within I had furnished it with every luxury that wealth, the most lavish and unsparing, could procure. Thither, under an assumed name, I brought my bride, and there was the greater part of my time spent. The people I had placed in the house believed I was a rich merchant, and this accounted for my frequent absences—(absences which Prudence rendered necessary) for the wealth which I lavished, and for the precautions of bolt, bar, and wall, which they imagined the result of commercial caution.

Oh the intoxication of that sweet Elysium, that Tadmor in life's desert—the possession of the one whom we have first loved! It is as if poetry, and music, and light, and the fresh breath of flowers, were all blent into one being, and from that being rose our existence! It is content made rapture—nothing to wish for, yet everything to feel! Was that air—the air which I had breathed hitherto? that earth—the earth which I had hitherto beheld? No, my heart dwelt in a new world, and all these motley and restless senses were melted into one sense — deep, silent, fathomless delight!

Well, too much of this species of love is not fit for a worldly tale, and I will turn, for the reader's relief, to worldly affections. From my first re-union with Isora, I had avoided all the former objects and acquaintances in which my time had been so charmingly employed. Tarleton was the first to suffer by my new pursuit; "What has altered you?" said he; "you drink not, neither do you play. The women say you are grown duller than a Norfolk parson, and neither the Puppet-Show, nor the Water-Theatre, the Spring Gardens, nor the Ring, Wills's, nor the Kit-Cat, the Mulberry Garden, nor the New Exchange, witness any longer your homage and devotion.—What has come over you?—speak!"

"Apathy!"

"Ah!—I understand—you are tired of these things; "pish, man!—go down into the country, the green fields will revive thee, and send thee back to London a new man!—One would indeed find the town intolerably dull, if the country were not, happily, a thousand times

duller,—go to the country, Count, or I shall drop your friendship."

"Drop it!" said I, yawning, and Tarleton took pet, and did as I desired him. Now had I got rid of my friend as easily as I had found him,—a matter that would not have been so readily accomplished had not Mr. Tarleton owed me certain monies, concerning which, from the moment he had "dropped my friendship," good-breeding effectually prevented his saying a single syllable to me ever after. There is no knowing the blessings of money until one has learnt to manage it properly.

So much, then, for the friend; now for the mistress. Lady Hasselton had, as Tarleton hinted before, resolved to play me a trick of spite; the reasons of our rupture really were, as I had stated to Tarleton, the mighty effects of little things. She lived in a sea of trifles, and she was desperately angry if her lover was not always sailing a pleasure-boat in the same ocean. Now this was expecting too much from me, and, after twisting our silken strings of attachment into all manner of fantastic forms, we fell fairly out one evening and broke the little ligatures in two. No sooner had I quarrelled with Tarleton, than Lady Hasselton received him in my place, and a week afterwards I was favored with an anonymous letter, informing me of the violent passion which a certain *dame de la cour* had conceived for me, and requesting me to meet her at an appointed place. I looked twice over the letter, and discovered in one corner of it, two *g's'* peculiar to the calligraphy of Lady Hasselton, though the rest of the letter (bad spelling excepted) was pretty decently disguised. Mr. Fielding was with me at the time; "What disturbs you?" said he, adjusting his knee-buckles.

"Read it!" said I, handing him the letter.

"Body of me, you are a lucky dog!" cried the beau. "You will hasten thither on the wings of love."

"Not a whit of it," said I; "I suspect that it comes from a rich old widow, whom I hate mortally."

"A rich old widow!" repeated Mr. Fielding, to whose eyes there was something very piquant in a jointure, and who thought consequently that there were few virginal flowers equal to a widow's weeds. "A rich old widow—you are right, Count, you are right. Don't go, don't think of it. I cannot abide those depraved creatures. Widow, indeed—quite an affront to your gallantry!"

"Very true," said I. "Suppose you supply my place?"

"I'd sooner be shot first," said Mr. Fielding, taking his departure, and begging me for the letter to wrap some sugar plums in.

Need I add, that Mr. Fielding repaired to the place of assignation, where he received, in the shape of a hearty drubbing, the kind favors intended for me? The story was now left for me to tell, not for the Lady Hasselton—and that makes all the difference in the manner a story is told—*me* narrante, it is de *te* fabula narratur—*te* narrante, and it is de *me* fabula, etc. Poor Lady Hasselton! to be laughed at, and have Tarleton for a lover!

I have gone back somewhat in the progress of my history, in order to make the above honorable mention of my friend and my mistress, thinking it due to their own merits, and thinking it may also be instructive to young gentlemen, who have not yet seen the world, to testify the exact nature and the probable duration of all the loves and friendships they are likely to find in that Great Monmouth Street of glittering and of damaged affections! I now resume the order of narration.

I wrote to Aubrey, thanking him for his intercession, but concealing, till we met, the measure I had adopted. I wrote also to my uncle, assuring him that I would take an early opportunity of hastening to Devereux Court, and conversing with him on the subject of his letter. And after an interval of some weeks, I received the two following answers from my correspondents: the latter arrived several days after the former.

FROM AUBREY DEVEREUX.

"I AM glad to understand from your letter, unexplanatory as it is, that you have followed my advice. I will shortly write to you more at large; at present I am on the eve of my departure for the North of England, and have merely time to assure you of my affection.

"AUBREY DEVEREUX."

"P.S. Gerald is in London—have you seen him? Oh this world! this world! how it clings to us, despite our education—our wishes, our conscience, our knowledge of the Dread Hereafter!"

LETTER FROM SIR WILLIAM DEVEREUX.

"My Dear Nephew,

"Thank thee for thy letter, and the new plays thou

sentest me down, and that droll new paper, the Spectator; it is a pretty shallow thing enough,—though it is not so racy as Rochester or little Sid would have made it; but I thank thee for it, because it shows thou wast not angry with thine old uncle for opposing thee on thy love whimsies (in which most young men are dreadfully obstinate), since thou didst provide so kindly for his amusement. Well, but, Morton, I hope thou hast got that crotchet clear out of thy mind, and prithee now *don't* talk of it when thou comest down to see me. I hate conversations on marriage more than a boy does flogging—od'sfish, I do. So you must humor me on that point!

"Aubrey has left me again, and I am quite alone—not that I was much better off when he was here, for he was wont, of late, to shun my poor room like a 'lazar house,' and when I spoke to his mother about it, she muttered something about 'example,' and 'corrupting.' 'Sdeath, Morton, is your old uncle, who loves all living things, down to poor Ponto the dog, the sort of man whose example corrupts youth? As for thy mother, she grows more solitary every day; and I don't know how it is, but I am not so fond of strange faces as I used to be. 'Tis a new thing for me to be avoided and alone. Why, I remember even little Sid, who had as much venom as most men, once said it was impossible to—Fie now—see if I was not going to preach a sermon from a text in favor of myself! But come, Morton, come, I long for your face again; it is not so soft as Aubrey's, nor so regular as Gerald's, but it is twice as kind as either. Come, before it is too late; I feel myself going; and, to tell thee a secret, the doctors tell me I may not last many months longer. Come, and laugh once more at the old knight's stories. Come, and show him that there is still some one not too good to love him. Come, and I will tell thee a famous thing of old Rowley, which I am too ill and too sad to tell thee now.

"WM. DEVEREUX."

Need I say that, upon receiving this letter. I resolved, without any delay, to set out for Devereux Court? I summoned Desmarais to me; he answered not my call: he was from home—an unfrequent occurrence with the necessitarian valet. I waited his return, which was not for some hours, in order to give him sundry orders for my departure. The exquisite Desmarais hemmed thrice—"Will Monsieur be so very kind as to excuse my accompanying him?" said he, with his usual air and tone of obsequious respect.

"And why?" The valet explained. A relation of his was in England only for a few days—the philosopher was most anxious to enjoy his society—a pleasure which fate might not again allow him.

Though I had grown accustomed to the man's services, and did not like to lose him even for a time, yet I could not refuse his request; and I therefore ordered another of my servants to supply his place. This change, however, determined me to adopt a plan which I had before meditated, viz., the conveying of my own person to Devereux Court on horseback, and sending my servant with my luggage in my post-chaise. The equestrian mode of travelling is, indeed to this day, the one most pleasing to me; and the reader will find me pursuing it many years afterwards, and to the same spot.

I might as well observe here that I had never entrusted Desmarais, no, nor one of my own servants, with the secret of my marriage with, or my visits to, Isora. I am a very fastidious person on those matters, and of all confidants, even in the most trifling affairs, I do most eschew those by whom we have the miserable honor to be served.

In order, then, to avoid having my horse brought me to Isora's house by any of these menial spies, I took the steed which I had selected for my journey, and rode to Isora's, with the intention of spending the evening there, and thence commencing my excursion with the morning light.

CHAPTER II.

Love—Parting—A Death Bed. After all Human Nature is a beautiful Fabric; and even its Imperfections are not odious to him who has studied the Science of its Architecture, and formed a reverent Estimate of its Creator.

IT is a noticeable thing how much fear increases love. I mean—for the aphorism requires explanation—how much we love in proportion to our fear of losing (or even to our fear of injury done to) the beloved object. 'Tis an instance of the reaction of the feelings—the love produces the fear, and the fear reproduces the love. This is one reason, among many, why women love so much more tenderly and anxiously than we do; and it is also one reason among many, why frequent absences are, in all stages of love, the most keen exciters of the passion. I never breathed, away from Isora, without trembling for her safety. I trembled lest this Barnard, if so I should still continue to call her persecutor, should again discover and again molest her. Whenever (and that was almost daily) I rode to the quiet and remote dwelling I had procured her, my

heart beat so vehemently, and my agitation was so intense, that on arriving at the gate I have frequently been unable, for several minutes, to demand admittance. There was, therefore, in the mysterious danger which ever seemed to hang over Isora, a perpetual irritation to a love otherwise but little inclined to slumber; and this constant excitement took away from the torpor into which domestic affection too often languishes, and increased my passion even while it diminished my happiness.

On my arrival now at Isora's, I found her already stationed at the window, watching for my coming. How her dark eyes lit into lustre when they saw me! How the rich blood mantled up under the soft cheek which feeling had refined of late into a paler hue, than it was wont, when I first gazed upon it, to wear! Then how sprang forth her light step to meet me! How trembled her low voice to welcome me! How spoke, from every gesture of her graceful form, the anxious, joyful, all-animating gladness of her heart! It is a melancholy pleasure to the dry, harsh, after-thoughts of later life, to think one has been thus loved; and one marvels, when one considers what one is now, how it could have ever been! That love *of ours* was never made for after years! It could never have flowed into the common, and cold channel of ordinary affairs! It could never have been mingled with the petty cares and the low objects with which the loves of all who live long together in this sordid and most earthly earth, are sooner or later blended! We could not have spared to others an atom of the great wealth of our affection. We were misers of every coin in that boundless treasury. It would have pierced me to the soul to have seen Isora smile upon another. I know not even, had we had children, if I should not have been jealous of my child! Was this selfish love? yes, it was intensely, wholly selfish; but it was a love made so only by its excess; nothing selfish on a smaller scale polluted it. There was not on earth that which the one would not have forfeited at the lightest desire of the other. So utterly were happiness and Isora entwined together that I could form no idea of the one with which the other was not connected. Was this love made for the many and miry roads through which man must travel? Was it made for age, or, worse than age, for those cool, ambitious, scheming years that we call mature, in which all the luxuriance and verdure of things are pared into tame shapes that mimic life, but a life that is estranged from nature, in which art is the only beauty, and regularity the only grace? No, in my heart of hearts, I feel that our love was not meant for the stages of life through which I have already passed; it would have made us miserable to see it fritter itself away, and to remember what it once was. Better as it is! better to mourn over the green bough than to look upon the sapless stem. You who now glance over these pages, are you a mother? if so, answer me one question—Would you not rather that the child whom you have cherished with your soul's care, whom you have nurtured at your bosom, whose young joys your eyes have sparkled to behold, whose lightest grief you have wept to witness, as you would have wept not for your own; over whose pure and unvexed sleep you have watched and prayed, and, as it lay before you thus still and unconscious of your vigil, have shaped out, oh, such bright hopes for its future lot; would you not rather that, while thus young and innocent, not a care tasted, not a crime incurred, it went down at once into the dark grave? Would you not rather suffer this grief, bitter though it be, than watch the predestined victim grow and ripen, and wind itself more and more around your heart, and when it is of full and mature age, and you yourself are stricken by years, and can form no new ties to replace the old that are severed, when woes have already bowed the darling of your hope, whom woe never was to touch, when sins have already darkened the bright, seraph, unclouded heart which sin never was to dim; behold it sink day by day altered, diseased, decayed, into the tomb which its childhood had in vain escaped? Answer me: would not the earlier fate be far gentler than the last? And if you *have* known and wept over that early tomb—if you have seen the infant flower fade away from the green soil of your affections—if you have missed the bounding step, and the laughing eye, and the winning mirth which made this sterile world a perpetual holiday—Mother of the Lost, if you have known, and you still pine for these, answer me yet again!—Is it not a comfort, even while you mourn, to think of all that that breast, now so silent, has escaped? The cream, the sparkle, the elixir of life, it had already quaffed; is it not sweet to

think it shunned the wormwood and the dregs? Answer me, even though the answer be in tears! Mourner, your child was to you what my early and only love was to me; and could you pierce down, down through a thousand fathom of ebbing thought, to the far depths of my heart, you would there behold a sorrow *and a consolation*, that have something in unison with your own!

When the light of the next morning broke into our room, Isora was still sleeping. Have you ever observed that the young, seen asleep and by the morning light, seem much younger even than they are? partly because the air and the light sleep of dawn bring a fresher bloom to the cheek, and partly, because the careless negligence and the graceful postures exclusively appropriated to youth, are forbidden by custom and formality through the day, and developing themselves unconsciously in sleep, they strike the eye like the ease and freedom of childhood itself. There, as I looked upon Isora's tranquil and most youthful beauty, over which circled and breathed an ineffable innocence—even as the finer and subtler air, which was imagined by those dreamy bards who kindled the soft creations of naiad and of nymph, to float around a goddess—I could not believe that aught evil awaited one for whom infancy itself seemed to linger,—linger as if no elder shape and less delicate hue were meet to be the garment of so much guilelessness and tenderness of heart. I felt, indeed, while I bent over her, and her regular and quiet breath came upon my cheek, that feeling which is exactly the reverse to a presentiment of ill. I felt as if, secure in her own purity, she had nothing to dread, so that even the pang of parting was lost in the confidence which stole over me as I then gazed.

I rose gently, went to the next room and dressed myself—I heard my horse neighing beneath, as the servant walked him lazily to and fro. I re-entered the bed-chamber, in order to take leave of Isora; she was already up. "What!" said I, "it is but three minutes since I left you asleep, and I stole away as gently as time does when with you."

"Ah!" said Isora, smiling and blushing too, "but for my part, I think there is an instinct to know, even if all the senses were shut up, whether the one we love is with us or not. The moment you left me, I felt it at once, even in sleep, and I woke. But you will not, no, you will not leave me yet!"

I think I see Isora now, as she stood by the window which she had opened, with a woman's minute anxiety, to survey even the aspect of the clouds, and beseech caution against the treachery of the skies. I think I see her now, as she stood the moment after I had torn myself from her embrace, and had looked back, as I reached the door, for one parting glance—her eyes all tenderness, her lips parted, and quivering with the attempt to smile—the long, glossy ringlets (through whose raven hue the *purpureum lumen* broke like an imprisoned sunbeam, straying in dishevelled beauty over her transparent neck; the throat bent in mute despondency; the head drooping; the arms half extended, and dropping gradually as my steps departed; the sunken, absorbed expression of face, form, and gesture, so steeped in the very bitterness of dejection—all are before me now, sorrowful, and lovely in sorrow, as they were beheld years ago, by the gray, cold, comfortless light of morning!

"God bless you—my own, own love," I said; and as my look lingered, I added, with a full but an assured heart; "and He will!" I tarried no more—I flung myself on my horse, and rode on as if I were speeding *to*, and not *from*, my bride.

The noon was far advanced, as, the day after I left Isora, I found myself entering the park in which Devereux Court is situated. I did not enter by one of the lodges, but through a private gate. My horse was thoroughly jaded; for the distance I had come was great, and I had ridden rapidly; and as I came into the park, I dismounted, and throwing the rein over my arm, proceeded slowly on foot. I was passing through a thick, long plantation, which belted the park and in which several walks and rides had been cut, when a man crossed the same road which I took, at a little distance before me. He was looking on the ground, and appeared wrapt in such earnest meditation that he neither saw nor heard me. But I had seen enough of him, in that brief space of time, to feel convinced that it was Montreuil whom I beheld. What brought him thither, him, whom I believed in London, immersed with Gerald in political schemes, and for whom these woods were not only interdicted ground, but to whom they must have also been

but a tame field of interest, after his audiences with ministers and nobles? I did not, however, pause to consider on his apparition; I rather quickened my pace towards the house, in the expectation of there ascertaining the cause of his visit.

The great gates of the outer court were open as usual: I rode unheedingly through them, and was soon at the door of the hall. The porter, who unfolded to my summons the ponderous door, uttered, when he saw me, an exclamation that seemed to my ear to have in it more of sorrow than welcome.

"How is your master?" I asked.

The man shook his head, but did not hasten to answer: and impressed with a vague alarm, I hurried on without repeating the question. On the staircase I met old Nicholls, my uncle's valet: I stopped and questioned him. My uncle had been seized on the preceding day with gout in the stomach, medical aid had been procured, but it was feared ineffectually, and the physicians had declared, about an hour before I arrived, that he could not, in human probability, outlive the night. Stifling the rising at my heart, I waited to hear no more —I flew up the stairs—I was at the door of my uncle's chamber—I stopped there, and listened; all was still—I opened the door gently —I stole in, and, creeping to the bed-side, knelt down and covered my face with my hands; for I required a pause for self-possession, before I had courage to look up. When I raised my eyes, I saw my mother on the opposite side; she sat on a chair with a draught of medicine in one hand, and a watch in the other. She caught my eye, but did not speak; she gave me a sign of recognition, and looked down again upon the watch. My uncle's back was turned to me, and he lay so still that, for some moments, I thought he was asleep; at last, however, he moved restlessly.

"It is past noon!" said he to my mother, "is it not?"

"It is three minutes and six seconds after four," replied my mother, looking closer at the watch.

My uncle sighed. "They have sent an express for the dear boy, madam?" said he.

"Exactly at half-past nine last evening," answered my mother, glancing at me.

"He could scarcely be here by this time," said my uncle, and he moved again in the bed. "Pish—how the pillow frets one."

"Is it too high?" said my mother.

"No," said my uncle, faintly, "no—no—the discomfort is not in the pillow, after all—'tis a fine day—is it not?"

"Very!" said my mother; "I wish you could go out."

My uncle did not answer: there was a pause. "Od'sfish, madam, are those carriage wheels?"

"No, Sir William—but—."

"There *are* sounds in my ear—my senses grow dim," said my uncle, unheeding her,— "would that I might live another day—I should not like to die without seeing him. 'Sdeath, madam, I do hear something behind!—Sobs, as I live!—Who sobs for the old knight?" and my uncle turned round, and saw me.

"My dear—dear uncle!" I said, and could say no more.

"Ah, Morton," cried the kind old man, putting his hand affectionately upon mine. "Beshrew me, but I think I have conquered the grim enemy now that you are come. But what's this, my boy?—tears—tears,—why little Sid—no, nor Rochester either, would ever have believed this if I had sworn it! Cheer up—cheer up."

But, seeing that I wept and sobbed the more, my uncle, after a pause, continued in the somewhat figurative strain which the reader has observed he sometimes adopted, and which perhaps his dramatic studies had taught him.

"Nay, Morton, what do you grieve for?—that Age should throw off its fardel of aches and pains, and no longer groan along its weary road, meeting cold looks and unwilling welcomes, as both host and comrade grow weary of the same face, and the spendthrift heart has no longer quip or smile wherewith to pay the reckoning? No—no—let the poor pedlar shuffle off his dull pack, and fall asleep. But I am glad you are come: I would sooner have one of your kind looks at your uncle's stale saws or jests than all the long faces about me, saving only the presence of your mother;" and with his characteristic gallantry, my uncle turned courteously to her.

"Dear Sir William!" said she, "it is time you should take your draught, and then would it not be better that you should see the chaplain—he waits without."

"Od'sfish," said my uncle, turning again to

me, "'tis the way with them all—when the body is past hope, comes the physician, and when the soul is past mending, comes the priest. No, madam, no, 'tis too late for either. —Thank ye, Morton, thank ye" (as I started up—took the draught from my mother's hand, and besought him to drink it), "'tis of no use; but if it pleases thee, I must,"—and he drank the medicine.

My mother rose, and walked towards the door—it was ajar, and, as my eye followed her figure, I perceived, through the opening, the black garb of the chaplain.

"Not yet," said she, quietly; "wait." And then gliding away, she seated herself by the window in silence, and told her beads.

My uncle continued:—"They have been at me, Morton, as if I had been a pagan; and I believe, in their hearts, they are not a little scandalized that I don't try to win the next world, by trembling like an ague. Faith now, I never could believe that Heaven was so partial to cowards; nor can I think, Morton, that Salvation is like a soldier's muster-roll, and that we may play the devil between hours, so that, at the last moment we whip in, and answer to our names. Od'sfish, Morton, I could tell thee a tale of that; but 'tis a long one, and we have not time now. Well, well, for my part, I deem reverently and gratefully of God, and do not believe He will be very wrath with our past enjoyment of life, if we have taken care that others should enjoy it too; nor do I think, with thy good mother, and Aubrey, dear child! that an idle word has the same weight in the Almighty's scales as a wicked deed."

"Blessed, blessed are they," I cried, through my tears, "on whose souls there is as little stain as there is on yours!"

"Faith, Morton, that's kindly said; and thou knowest not how strangely it sounds, after their exhortations to repentance. I know I have had my faults, and walked on to our common goal in a very irregular line: but I never wronged the living nor slandered the dead, nor ever shut my heart to the poor—'twere a burning sin if I had; and I have loved all men and all things, and I never bore ill-will to a creature. Poor Ponto, Morton, thou wilt take care of poor Ponto, when I'm dead—nay, nay, don't grieve so. Go, my child, go—compose thyself while I see the priest, for 'twill please thy poor mother; and though she thinks harshly of me now, I should not like her to do so *to-morrow!* Go, my dear boy, go."

I went from the room, and waited by the door, till the office of the priest was over. My mother then came out, and said Sir William had composed himself to sleep. While she was yet speaking, Gerald surprised me by his appearance. I learned that he had been in the house for the last three days, and when I heard this, I involuntarily accounted for the appearance of Montreuil. I saluted him distantly, and he returned my greeting with the like pride. He seemed, however, though in a less degree, to share in my emotions; and my heart softened to him for it. Nevertheless we stood apart, and met not as brothers should have met by the death-bed of a mutual benefactor.

"Will you wait without?" said my mother.

"No," answered I, "I will watch over him." So I stole in, with a light step, and seated myself by my uncle's bed-side. He was asleep, and his sleep was as hushed and quiet as an infant's. I looked upon his face, and saw a change had come over it, and was increasing sensibly: but there was neither harshness nor darkness in the change, awful as it was. The soul, so long nurtured on benevolence, could not, in parting, leave a rude stamp on the kindly clay which had seconded its impulses so well.

The evening had just set in, when my uncle woke; he turned very gently, and smiled when he saw me.

"It is late," said he, and I observed with a wrung heart, that his voice was fainter.

"No, sir, not very," said I.

"Late enough, my child; the warm sun has gone down; and 'tis a good time to close one's eyes when all without looks gray and chill: methinks it is easier to wish thee farewell, Morton, when I see thy face indistinctly. I am glad I shall not die in the day time. Give me thy hand, my child, and tell me that thou art not angry with thine old uncle for thwarting thee in that love business. I have heard tales of the girl, too, which make me glad, for thy sake, that it is all off, though I might not tell thee of them before. 'Tis very dark, Morton. I have had a pleasant sleep.—Od'sfish, I do not think a bad man would have slept so well. —The fire burns dim, Morton—it is very cold. Cover me up—double the counterpane over

the legs, Morton. I remember once walking in the Mall—little Sid said 'Devereux.'—It is colder and colder, Morton—raise the blankets more over the back. 'Devereux,' said little Sid—faith, Morton, 'tis ice now—where art thou?—is the fire out, that I can't see thee? Remember thine old uncle, Morton—and—and—don't forget poor—Ponto.—Bless thee, my child—bless you all!"

And my uncle died!

CHAPTER III.

A great Change of Prospects.

I SHUT myself up in the apartments prepared for me (they were not those I had formerly occupied), and refused all participation in my solitude, till, after an interval of some days, my mother came to summon me to the opening of the will. She was more moved than I had expected. "It is a pity," said she, as we descended the stairs, "that Aubrey is not here, and that we should be so unacquainted with the exact place where he is likely to be that I fear the letter I sent him may be long delayed, or, indeed, altogether miscarry."

"Is not the Abbé here?" said I, listlessly.

"No!" answered my mother, "to be sure not."

"He has *been* here," said I, greatly surprised. "I certainly saw him on the day of my arrival."

"Impossible!" said my mother, in evident astonishment; and seeing that, at all events, she was unacquainted with the circumstance, I said no more.

The will was to be read in the little room, where my uncle had been accustomed to sit. I felt it as a sacrilege to his memory to choose that spot for such an office, but I said nothing. Gerald and my mother, the lawyer, (a neighboring attorney, named Oswald), and myself, were the only persons present;—Mr. Oswald hemmed thrice, and broke the seal. After a preliminary, strongly characteristic of the testator, he came to the disposition of the estates. I had never once, since my poor uncle's death, thought upon the chances of his will—indeed, knowing myself so entirely his favorite, I could not, if I had thought upon them, have entertained a doubt as to their result. What then was my astonishment when, couched in terms of the strongest affection, the whole bulk of the property was bequeathed to Gerald;—to Aubrey the sum of forty, to myself that of twenty, thousand pounds (a capital considerably less than the yearly income of my uncle's princely estates), was alloted. Then followed a list of minor bequests,—to my mother an annuity of three thousand a year, with the privilege of apartments in the house during her life; to each of the servants legacies sufficient for independence; to a few friends, and distant connections of the family, tokens of the testator's remembrance,—even the horses to his carriage, and the dogs that fed from his menials' table, were not forgotten, but were to be set apart from work, and maintained in indolence during their remaining span of life. The will was concluded—I could not believe my senses: not a word was said as a reason for giving Gerald the priority.

I rose calmly enough. "Suffer me, sir," said I to the lawyer, "to satisfy my own eyes." Mr. Oswald bowed, and placed the will in my hands. I glanced at Gerald as I took it: his countenance betrayed, or feigned, an astonishment equal to my own. With a jealous, searching, scrutinizing eye, I examined the words of the bequest: I examined especially (for I suspected that the names must have been exchanged) the place in which my name and Gerald's occurred. In vain: all was smooth and fair to the eye, not a vestige of possible erasure or alteration was visible. I looked next at the wording of the will: it was evidently my uncle's—no one could have feigned or imitated the peculiar turn of his expressions; and, above all, many parts of the will (the affectionate and personal parts) were in his own handwriting.

"The date," said I, "is, I perceive, of very recent period; the will is signed by two witnesses beside yourself. Who and where are they?"

"Robert Lister, the first signature, my clerk, he is since dead, sir."

"Dead!" said I; "and the other witness, George Davis?"

"Is one of Sir William's tenants and is below, sir, in waiting."

"Let him come up," and a middle-sized. stout man, with a blunt, bold, open countenance, was admitted.

"Did you witness this will?" said I.

"I did, your honor?"

"And this is your hand-writing?" pointing to the scarcely legible scrawl.

"Yees, your honor," said the man, scratching his head. "I think it be, they are my *ees*, and *G*, and *D*, sure enough."

"And do you know the purport of the will you signed?"

"Anan!"

"I mean, do you know to whom Sir William—stop, Mr. Oswald—suffer the man to answer me—to whom Sir William left his property?"

"Noa, to be sure, sir; the will was a woundy long one, and Maister Oswald there told me it was no use to read it over to me, but merely to sign, as a witness to Sir William's hand-writing."

"Enough; you may retire;" and George Davis vanished.

"Mr. Oswald," said I, approaching the attorney, "I may wrong you, and if so, I am sorry for it, but I suspect there has been foul practice in this deed. I have reason to be convinced that Sir William Devereux could never have made this devise. I give you warning, sir, that I shall bring the business immediately before a court of law, and that if guilty—ay, tremble, sir—of what I suspect, you will answer for this deed at the foot of the gallows."

I turned to Gerald, who rose while I was yet speaking. Before I could address him, he exclaimed with evident and extreme agitation:

"You cannot, Morton—you cannot—you dare not insinuate that I, your brother, have been base enough to forge, or to instigate the forgery of, this will?"

Gerald's agitation made me still less doubtful of his guilt.

"The case, sir," I answered coldly, "stands thus: my uncle could not have made this will—it is a devise that must seem incredible to all who knew aught of our domestic circumstances. Fraud has been practised, how I know not! by whom I do know."

"Morton, Morton—this is insufferable—I cannot bear such charges, even from a brother."

"Charges!—your conscience speaks, sir—not I; no one benefits by this fraud but you: pardon me if I draw an inference from a fact."

So saying, I turned on my heel, and abruptly left the apartment. I ascended the stairs which led to my own: there I found my servant preparing the paraphernalia in which that very evening I was to attend my uncle's funeral. I gave him, with a calm and collected voice, the necessary instructions for following me to town immediately after that event, and then I passed on to the room where the deceased lay in state. The room was hung with black—the gorgeous pall, wrought with the proud heraldry of our line, lay over the coffin, and by the lights which made, in that old chamber, a more brilliant, yet more ghastly, day, sat the hired watchers of the dead.

I bade them leave me, and kneeling down beside the coffin, I poured out the last expressions of my grief. I rose, and was retiring once more to my room, when I encountered Gerald.

"Morton," said he, "I own to you, I myself am astounded by my uncle's will. I do not come to make you offers—you would not accept them—I do not come to vindicate myself, it is beneath me; and we have never been as brothers, and we know not their language—but I *do* come to demand you to retract the dark and causeless suspicions you have vented against me, and also to assure you that, if you have doubts of the authenticity of the will, so far from throwing obstacles in your way, I myself will join in the inquiries you institute, and the expenses of the law."

I felt some difficulty in curbing my indignation while Gerald thus spoke. I saw before me the persecutor of Isora—the fraudulent robber of my rights, and I heard this enemy speak to me of aiding in the inquiries which were to convict himself of the basest, if not the blackest, of human crimes; there was something too in the reserved and yet insolent tone of his voice which, reminding me as it did of our long aversion to each other, made my very blood creep with abhorrence. I turned away, that I might not break my oath to Isora, for I felt strongly tempted to do so; and said in as calm an accent as I could command, "The case will, I trust, require no king's evidence; and, at least, I will not be beholden to the man whom my reason condemns for any assistance in bringing upon himself the ultimate condemnation of the law."

Gerald looked at me sternly: "Were you not my brother," said he, in a low tone, "I would, for a charge so dishonoring my fair name, strike you dead at my feet."

"It is a wonderful exertion of fraternal love," I rejoined, with a scornful laugh, but an eye flashing with passions a thousand times more fierce than scorn, "that prevents your adding that last favor to those you have already bestowed on me."

Gerald, with a muttered curse, placed his hand upon his sword; my own rapier was instantly half drawn, when to save us from the great guilt of mortal contest against each other, steps were heard, and a number of the domestics charged with melancholy duties at the approaching rite, were seen slowly sweeping in black robes along the opposite gallery. Perhaps that interruption restored both of us to our senses, for we said, almost in the same breath, and nearly in the same phrase, "This way of terminating strife is not for us;" and, as Gerald spoke, he turned slowly away, descended the staircase, and disappeared.

The funeral took place at night: a numerous procession of the tenants and peasantry attended. My poor uncle! there was not a dry eye for thee but those of thine own kindred. Tall, stately, erect in the power and majesty of his unrivalled form, stood Gerald, already assuming the dignity and lordship which, to speak frankly, so well became him; my mother's face was turned from me, but her attitude proclaimed her utterly absorbed in prayer. As for myself, my heart seemed hardened: I could not betray to the gaze of a hundred strangers the emotion which I would have hidden from those whom I loved the most, wrapped in my cloak, with arms folded on my breast, and eyes bent to the ground, I leaned against one of the pillars of the chapel, apart, and apparently unmoved.

But when they were about to lower the body into the vault a momentary weakness came over me. I made an involuntary step forward, a single but deep groan of anguish broke from me, and then, covering my face with my mantle, I resumed my former attitude, and all was still. The rite was over; in many and broken groups the spectators passed from the chapel: some to speculate on the future lord, some to mourn over the late, and all to return the next morning to their wonted business, and let the glad sun teach them to forget the past, until for themselves the sun should be no more, and the forgetfulness eternal.

The hour was so late that I relinquished my intention of leaving the house that night; I ordered my horse to be in readiness at daybreak, and, before I retired to rest, I went to my mother's apartments: she received me with more feeling than she had ever testified before.

"Believe me, Morton," said she, and she kissed my forehead; "believe me, I can fully enter into the feelings which you must naturally experience on an event so contrary to your expectations. I cannot conceal from you how much I am surprised. Certainly Sir William never gave any of us cause to suppose that he liked either of your brothers—Gerald less than Aubrey—so much as yourself; nor, poor man, was he in other things at all addicted to conceal his opinions."

"It is true, my mother," said I; "it is true. Have you not therefore some suspicions of the anthenticity of the will?"

"Suspicions!" cried my mother. "No!—impossible!—suspicions of whom? You could not think Gerald so base, and who else had an interest in deception?—Besides, the signature is undoubtedly Sir William's handwriting, and the will was regularly witnessed; suspicions, Morton—no, impossible! Reflect, too, how eccentric and humorsome your uncle always was: suspicions!—no, impossible!"

"Such things have been, my mother, nor are they uncommon: men will hazard their souls, ay, and what to some is more precious still, their lives too—for the vile clay we call money. But enough of this now: the Law—that great arbiter—that eater of the oyster, and divider of its shells—the Law will decide between us, and if against me, as I suppose, and fear the decision will be—why I must be a suitor to Fortune, instead of her commander. Give me your blessing, my dearest mother; I cannot stay longer in this house: to-morrow I leave you."

And my mother did bless me, and I fell upon her neck and clung to it. "Ah!" thought I, "this blessing is almost worth my uncle's fortune."

I returned to my room—there I saw on the table the case of the sword sent me by the French king. I had left it with my uncle, on my departure to town, and it had been found among his effects and reclaimed by me. I took out the sword, and drew it from the scabbard.

"Come," said I, and I kindled with a melancholy, yet a deep, enthusiasm, as I looked along the blade, "come, my bright friend, with thee

through this labyrinth which we call the world, will I carve my way! Fairest and speediest of earth's levellers, thou makest the path from the low valley to the steep hill, and shapest the soldier's axe into the monarch's sceptre! The laurel and the fasces, and the curule car, and the emperor's purple—what are these but thy playthings, alternately thy scorn and thy reward? Founder of all empires, propagator of all creeds, thou leddest the Gaul and the Goth, and the gods of Rome and Greece crumbled upon their altars! Beneath thee, the fires of the Gheber waved pale, and on thy point the badge of the camel-driver blazed like a sun over the startled East! Eternal arbiter, and unconquerable despot, while the passions of mankind exist! Most solemn of hypocrites—circling blood with glory as with a halo, and consecrating homicide and massacre with a hollow name, which the parched throat of thy votary, in the battle and the agony shouteth out with its last breath! Star of all human destinies! I kneel before thee, and invoke from thy bright astrology an omen and a smile."

CHAPTER IV.

An Episode—The Son of the Greatest Man who (one only excepted) *ever rose to a Throne*, but by no means of the Greatest Man (save one) *who ever existed.*

Before sunrise the next morning, I had commenced my return to London. I had previously entrusted to the *locum tenens* of the sage Desmarais, the royal gift, and (singular conjunction!) poor Ponto, my uncle's dog. Here let me pause, as I shall have no other opportunity to mention him, to record the fate of the canine bequest. He accompanied me some years afterwards to France, and he died there in extreme age. I shed tears, as I saw the last relic of my poor uncle expire, and I was not consoled even though he was buried in the garden of the gallant Villars, and immortalized by an epitaph from the pen of the courtly Chaulieu.

Leaving my horse to select his own pace, I surrendered myself to reflection upon the strange alteration that had taken place in my fortunes. There did not, in my own mind, rest a doubt but that some villany had been practised with respect to the will. My uncle's constant and unvarying favor towards me; the unequivocal expressions he himself from time to time had dropped indicative of his future intentions on my behalf: the easy natural manner in which he had seemed to consider, as a thing of course, my heritage and succession to his estates; all, coupled with his own frank and kindly character, so little disposed to raise hopes which he meant to disappoint, might alone have been sufficient to arouse my suspicions at a devise so contrary to all past experience of the testator. But when to these were linked the bold temper, and the daring intellect of my brother, joined to his personal hatred to myself: his close intimacy with Montreuil, whom I believed capable of the darkest designs; the sudden and evidently concealed appearance of the latter on the day my uncle died; the agitation and paleness of the attorney; the enormous advantages accruing to Gerald, and to no one else, from the terms of the devise: when these were all united into one focus of evidence, they appeared to me to leave no doubt of the forgery of the testament, and the crime of Gerald. Nor was there anything in my brother's bearing and manner calculated to abate my suspicions. His agitation was real; his surprise might have been feigned; his offer of assistance in investigation was an unmeaning bravado; his conduct to myself testified his continued ill-will towards me—an ill-will which might possibly have instigated him in the fraud, scarcely less than the whispers of interest and cupidity.

But while this was the natural and indelible impression on my mind, I could not disguise from myself the extreme difficulty I should experience in resisting my brother's claim. So far as my utter want of all legal knowledge would allow me to decide, I could perceive nothing in the will itself which would admit of a lawyer's successful cavil: my reasons for suspicion, so conclusive to myself, would seem nugatory to a judge. My uncle was known as a humorist; and prove that a man differs from others in one thing, and the world will believe that he differs from them in a thousand. His favor to me would be, in the popular eye, only an eccentricity, and the unlooked-for disposition of his will only a caprice. Possession, too, gave Gerald a proverbial vantage ground, which my whole life might be wasted in contesting; while his command of an immense

wealth might, more than probably, exhaust my spirit by delay, and my fortune by expenses. Precious prerogative of law to reverse the attribute of the Almighty! to fill the *rich* with good things, but to send the poor empty away! *In corruptissimâ republicâ plurimæ leges.* Legislation perplexed is synonymous with crime unpunished. A reflection, by the way, I should never have made, if I had never had a law-suit—sufferers are ever reformers.

Revolving, then, these anxious and unpleasing thoughts, interrupted, at times, by regrets of a purer and less selfish nature for the friend I had lost, and wandering, at others, to the brighter anticipations of rejoining Isora, and drinking from her eyes my comfort for the past, and my hope for the future, I continued and concluded my day's travel.

The next day, on resuming my journey, and on feeling the time approach that would bring me to Isora, something like joy became the most prevalent feeling on my mind. So true it is that misfortunes little affect us so long as we have some ulterior object, which, by rousing hope, steals us from affliction. Alas! the pang of a moment becomes intolerable when we know of nothing *beyond* the moment which it soothes us to anticipate! Happiness lives in the light of the future: attack the present—she defies you! Darken the future, and you destroy her!

It was a beautiful morning: through the vapors, which rolled slowly away beneath his beams, the sun broke gloriously forth; and over wood and hill, and the low plains, which, covered with gold corn, stretched immediately before me, his smile lay in stillness, but in joy. And ever from out the brake and the scattered copse, which at frequent intervals beset the road, the merry birds sent a fitful and glad music to mingle with the sweets and freshness of the air.

I had accomplished the greater part of my journey, and had entered into a more wooded and garden-like description of country, when I perceived an old man, in a kind of low chaise, vainly endeavoring to hold in a little, but spirited horse, which had taken alarm at some object on the road, and was running away with its driver. The age of the gentleman, and the lightness of the chaise, gave me some alarm for the safety of the driver; so, tying my own horse to a gate, lest the sound of his hoofs might only increase the speed and fear of the fugitive, I ran with a swift and noiseless step along the other side of the hedge, and coming out into the road, just before the pony's head, I succeeded in arresting him, at rather a critical spot and moment. The old gentleman very soon recovered his alarm; and, returning me many thanks for my interference, requested me to accompany him to his house, which he said was two or three miles distant.

Though I had no desire to be delayed in my journey, for the mere sake of seeing an old gentleman's house, I thought my new acquaintance's safety required me, at least, to offer to act as his charioteer till we reached his house. To my secret vexation at that time, though I afterwards thought the petty inconvenience was amply repaid by a conference with a very singular and once noted character, the offer was accepted. Surrendering my own steed to the care of a ragged boy, who promised to lead it with equal judgment and zeal, I entered the little car, and keeping a firm hand and constant eye on the reins, brought the offending quadruped into a very equable and sedate pace.

"Poor Pob," said the old gentleman, apostrophizing his horse; "poor Pob, like thy betters, thou knowest the weak hand from the strong; and when thou art not held in by power, thou wilt chafe against love; so that thou renewest in my mind the remembrance of its favorite maxim, viz., 'The only preventative to rebellion is restraint!'"

"Your observation, sir," said I, rather struck by this address, "makes very little in favor of the more generous feelings by which we ought to be actuated. It is a base mind which always requires the bit and bridle."

"It is, sir," answered the old gentleman; "I allow it; but, though I have some love for human nature, I have no respect for it; and while I pity its infirmities, I cannot but confess them."

"Methinks, sir," replied I, "that you have uttered in that short speech more sound philosophy than I have heard for months. There is wisdom in not thinking too loftily of human clay, and benevolence in not judging it too harshly, and something, too, of magnanimity in this moderation; for we seldom contemn mankind till they have hurt us, and when they have hurt us, we seldom do anything but detest them for the injury."

"You speak shrewdly, sir, for one so young," returned the old man, looking hard at me; "and I will be sworn you have suffered some cares; for we never begin to think, till we are a little afraid to hope."

I sighed as I answered, "There are some men, I fancy, to whom constitution supplies the office of care; who, naturally melancholy, become easily addicted to reflection, and reflection is a soil which soon repays us for whatever trouble we bestow upon its culture."

"True, sir!" said my companion — and there was a pause. The old gentleman resumed: "We are not far from my home now (or rather my temporary residence, for my proper and general home is at Cheshunt, in Hertfordshire); and, as the day is scarcely half spent, I trust you will not object to partake of a hermit's fare. Nay, nay, no excuse: I assure you that I am not a gossip in general, or a liberal dispenser of invitations; and I think, if you refuse me now, you will hereafter regret it."

My curiosity was rather excited by this threat: and, reflecting that my horse required a short rest, I subdued my impatience to return to town, and accepted the invitation. We came presently to a house of moderate size, and rather antique fashion. This, the old man informed me, was his present abode. A servant, almost as old as his master, came to the door, and, giving his arm to my host, led him, for he was rather lame and otherwise infirm, across a small hall into a long, low apartment. I followed.

A miniature of Oliver Cromwell, placed over the chimney-piece, forcibly arrested my attention.

"It is the only portrait of the Protector, I ever saw," said I, "which impresses on me the certainty of a likeness; that resolute, gloomy brow—that stubborn lip—that heavy, yet not stolid, expression—all seem to warrant resemblance to that singular and fortunate man, to whom folly appears to have been as great an instrument of success as wisdom, and who rose to the supreme power, perhaps, no less from a pitiable fanaticism than an admirable genius. So true is it that great men often soar to their height, by qualities the least obvious to the spectator, and (to stoop to a low comparison) resemble that animal * in which a common ligament supplies the place and possesses the property, of wings."

The old man smiled very slightly, as I made this remark. "If this be true," said he, with an impressive tone, "though we may wonder less at the talents of the Protector, we must be more indulgent to his character, nor condemn him for insincerity, when at heart he himself was deceived."

"It is in that light," said I, "that I have always viewed his conduct. And though myself, by prejudice, a cavalier, and a tory, I own that Cromwell (hypocrite as he is esteemed) appears to me as much to have exceeded his royal antagonist and victim, in the virtue of sincerity, as he did in the grandeur of his genius, and the profound consistency of his ambition."

"Sir," said my host, with a warmth that astonished me, "you seem to have known that man, so justly do you judge him. Yes," said he, after a pause, "yes, perhaps no one ever so varnished to his own breast his designs—no one, so covetous of glory, was ever so duped by conscience—no one ever rose to such a height, through so few acts that seemed to himself worthy of remorse."

At this part of our conversation, the servant, entering, announced dinner. We adjourned to another room, and partook of a homely yet not uninviting repast. When men are pleased with each other, conversation soon gets beyond the ordinary surfaces to talk; and an exchange of deeper opinions is speedily effected by what old Barnes * quaintly enough terms, "The Gentleman Usher of all Knowledge—Sermocination!"

It was a pretty, though small room, where we dined; and I observed that in this apartment, as in the other into which I had been first ushered, there were several books scattered about, in that confusion and number which show that they have become to their owner both the choicest luxury and the least dispensable necessary. So, during dinner time, we talked principally upon books, and I observed that those which my host seemed to know the best were of the elegant and poetical order of philosophers, who, more fascinating than deep, preach up the blessings of a solitude which is useless, and a content, which, deprived of passion, excitement, and energy, would, if it could ever exist, only be a dignified name for vegetation.

* The flying squirrel.

* In the Gerania.

"So," said he, when, the dinner being removed, we were left alone with that substitute for all society—wine! "so you are going to town: in four hours more you will be in that great focus of noise, falsehood, hollow joy, and real sorrow. Do you know that I have become so wedded to the country that I cannot but consider all those who leave it for the turbulent city, in the same light, half wondering, half compassionating, as that in which the ancients regarded the hardy adventurers who left the safe land and their happy homes, voluntarily to expose themselves in a frail vessel to the dangers of an uncertain sea. Here, when I look out on the green fields, and the blue sky, the quiet herds, basking in the sunshine, or scattered over the unpolluted plains, I cannot but exclaim with Pliny, 'This is the true Μουσειον!' this is the source whence flow inspiration to the mind and tranquillity to the heart! And in my love of nature—more confiding and constant than ever is the love we bear to women—I cry with the tender and sweet Tibullus—

'Ego composito securus acervo
Despiciam dites—despiciamque famem.'" *

"These," said I, "are the sentiments we all (perhaps the most restless of us the most passionately) at times experience. But there is in our hearts some secret, but irresistible, principle, that impels as, as a rolling circle, onward, onward, in the great orbit of our destiny; nor do we find a respite until the wheels on which we move are broken—at the tomb."

"Yet," said my host, "the internal principle you speak of can be arrested before the grave: at least stilled and impeded. You will smile incredulously, perhaps (for I see you do not know who I am), when I tell you that I might once have been a monarch, and that obscurity seemed to me more enviable than empire; I resigned the occasion: the tide of fortune rolled onward, and left me safe, but solitary and forsaken, upon the dry land. If you wonder at my choice, you will wonder still more when I tell you that I have never repented it."

Greatly surprised, and even startled, I heard my host make this strange avowal. "Forgive me," said I, "but you have powerfully excited my interest; dare I inquire from whose experience I am now deriving a lesson?"

"Not yet," said my host, smiling, "not till our conversation is over, and you have bid the old anchorite adieu, in all probability, for ever: you will then know that you have conversed with a man, perhaps more universally neglected and contemned than any of his contemporaries. Yes," he continued, "yes, I resigned power, and I got no praise for my moderation, but contempt for my folly; no human being would believe that I could have relinquished that treasure through a disregard for its possession which others would only have relinquished through an incapacity to retain it; and that which, had they seen it recorded in an ancient history, men would have regarded as the height of philosophy, they despised when acted under their eyes, as the extremest abasement of imbecility. Yet I compare my lot with that of the great man whom I was expected to equal in ambition, and to whose grandeur I might have succeeded; and am convinced that in this retreat I am more to be envied than he in the plenitude of his power and the height of his renown; yet is not happiness the aim of wisdom? if my choice is happier than his, is it not wiser?"

"Alas," thought I, "the wisest men seldom have the loftiest genius, and perhaps happiness is granted rather to mediocrity of mind than to mediocrity of circumstance;" but I did not give so uncourteous a reply to my host an audible utterance; on the contrary: "I do not doubt," said I, as I rose to depart, "the wisdom of a choice which has brought you self-gratulation. And it has been said by a man both great and good, a man to whose mind was open the lore of the closet and the experience of courts—that in wisdom or in folly, 'the only difference between one man and another, is whether a man governs his passions or his passions him.' According to this rule, which indeed is a classic and a golden aphorism, Alexander, on the throne of Persia, might have been an idiot to Diogenes in his tub. And now, sir, in wishing you farewell, let me again crave your indulgence to my curiosity."

"Not yet, not yet," answered my host; and he led me once more into the other room. While they were preparing my horse, we renewed our conversation. To the best of my recollection, we talked about Plato; but I had now become so impatient to rejoin Isora that I did not accord to my worthy host the patient

* Satisfied with my little hoard, I can despise wealth—and fear not hunger.

attention I had hitherto given him. When I took leave of him he blessed me, and placed a piece of paper in my hand; "Do not open this," said he, "till you are at least two miles hence, your curiosity will then be satisfied. If ever you travel this road again, or if ever you pass by Cheshunt, pause and see if the old philosopher is dead. Adieu!"

And so we parted.

You may be sure that I had not passed the appointed distance of two miles very far when I opened the paper and read the following words:—

"Perhaps, young stranger, at some future period of a life, which I venture to foretell will be adventurous and eventful, it may afford you a matter for reflection, or a resting-spot for a moral, to remember that you have seen, in old age and obscurity, the son of Him who shook an empire, avenged a people, and obtained a throne, only to be the victim of his own passions and the dupe of his own reason. I repeat now the question I before put to you—was the fate of the great Protector fairer than that of the despised and forgotten

"RICHARD CROMWELL?"

"So," thought I, "it is indeed with the son of the greatest ruler England or perhaps, in modern times, Europe has ever produced, that I have held this conversation upon content! Yes, perhaps your fate *is* more to be envied than that of your illustrious father; but who *would* envy it more? Strange that while we pretend that happiness is the object of all desire, happiness is the last thing which we covet. Love, and wealth, and pleasure, and honor,—these are the roads which we take, so long that, accustomed to the mere travel, we forget that it was first undertaken, not for the course, but the goal; and, in the common infatuation which pervades all our race, we make the toil the mead, and in following the means forsake the end."

I never saw my host again; very shortly afterwards he died:* and fate, which had marked with so strong a separation the lives of the father and the son, united in that death—as its greatest, so its only universal, blessing—the philosopher and the recluse with the warrior and the chief!

* Richard Cromwell died in 1712.—ED.

CHAPTER V.

In which the Hero shows decision on more points than one—More of Isora's character is developed.

To use the fine image in the Arcadia, it was "when the sun, like a noble heart, began to show his greatest countenance in his lowest estate," that I arrived at Isora's door. I had written to her once, to announce my uncle's death, and the day of my return; but I had not mentioned in my letter my reverse of fortunes: I reserved that communication till it could be softened by our meeting. I saw by the countenance of the servant who admitted me that all was well; so I asked no question—I flew up the stairs—I broke into Isora's chamber, and in an instant she was in my arms. Ah, Love, Love! wherefore art thou so transitory a pilgrim on the earth—an evening cloud which hovers on our horizon, drinking the hues of the sun, that grows ominously brighter as it verges to the shadow and the night, and which, the moment that sun is set, wanders on in darkness or descends in tears?

"And now, my bird of Paradise," said I, as we sat alone in the apartment I had fitted up as the banqueting room, and on which, though small in its proportions, I had lavished all the love of luxury and of show which made one of my most prevailing weaknesses, "and now, how has time passed with you since we parted?"

"Need you ask, Morton? Ah, have you ever noted a poor dog deserted by its master, or rather not deserted, for that you know is not my case yet," added Isora, playfully, "but left at home while the master went abroad? have you noted how restless the poor animal is—how it refuses all company and all comfort—how it goes a hundred times a day into the room which its master is wont mostly to inhabit—how it creeps on the sofa or the chair which the same absent idler was accustomed to press—how it selects some article of his very clothing, and curls jealously around it, and hides and watches over it, as I have hid and watched over this glove, Morton? Have you ever noted that humble creature whose whole happiness is the smile of one being, when the smile was away?—then, Morton, you can tell how my time has passed during your absence."

I answered Isora by endearments and by compliments. She turned away from the latter.

"Never call me those fine names, I implore you," she whispered; "call me only by those pretty pet words by which I know you will never call any one else. Bee and bird are my names, and mine only; but beauty and angel are names you have given, or may give, to a hundred others! Promise me, then, to address me only in our own language."

"I promise, and lo, the seal to the promise. But tell me, Isora, do you not love these rare scents that make an Araby of this unmellowed clime? Do you not love the profusion of light which reflects so dazzling a lustre on that soft cheek—and those eyes which the ancient romancer * must have dreamt of when he wrote so prettily of "eyes that seemed a temple where love and beauty were married?" Does not yon fruit take a more tempting hue, bedded as it is in those golden leaves? Does not sleep seem to hover with a downier wing over those sofas on which the limbs of a princess have been laid? In a word, is there not in luxury and in pomp a spell which no gentler or wiser mind would disdain?"

"It may be so!" said Isora, sighing; "but the splendor which surrounds us chills and almost terrifies me. I think that every proof of your wealth and rank puts me farther from you; then, too, I have some remembrance of the green sod, and the silver rill, and the trees upon which the young winds sing and play—and I own that it is with the country, and not the town, that all my ideas of luxury are wed."

"But the numerous attendants, the long row of liveried hirelings, through which you may pass, as through a lane, the caparisoned steeds, the stately equipage, the jewelled tiara, the costly robe which matrons imitate and envy, the music, which lulls you to sleep, the lighted show, the gorgeous stage;—all these, the attributes or gifts of wealth, all these that you have the right to hope you will one day or other command, you will own are what you could very reluctantly forego!"

"Do you think so, Morton? Ah, I wish you were of my humble temper: the more we limit and concentre happiness, the more certain, I think, we are of securing it—they who widen the circle encroach upon the boundaries of danger; and they who freight their wealth upon an hundred vessels are more liable, Morton, are they not, to the peril of the winds and the waves than they who venture it only upon one?"

"Admirably reasoned, my little sophist; but if the one ship sink?"

"Why, I would embark myself in it as well as my wealth, and should sink with it."

"Well, well, Isora, your philosophy will, perhaps, soon be put to the test. I will talk to you to-morrow of business."

"And why not to-night?"

"To-night, when I have just returned! No, to-night I will only talk to you of love!"

As may be supposed, Isora was readily reconciled to my change of circumstances, and indeed that sum which seemed poverty to me, appeared positive wealth to her. But perhaps few men are by nature and inclination more luxurious and costly than myself; always accustomed to a profuse expenditure at my uncle's, I fell insensibly and *con amore* on my *début* in London, into all the extravagancies of the age. Sir William, pleased, rather than discontented with my habits, especially as they were attended with some *éclat*, pressed upon me proofs of his generosity which, since I knew his wealth and considered myself his heir, I did not scruple to accept, and at the time of my return to London after his death, I had not only spent to the full the princely allowance I had received from him, but was above half my whole fortune in debt. However, I had horses and equipages, jewels and plate, and I did not long wrestle with my pride before I obtained the victory, and sent all my valuables to the hammer. They sold pretty well, all things considered, for I had a certain reputation in the world for taste and munificence; and when I had received the product and paid my debts, I found that the whole balance in my favor, including, of course, my uncle's legacy, was fifteen thousand pounds.

It was no bad younger brother's portion, perhaps, but I was in no humor to be made a younger brother without a struggle. So I went to the lawyers; they looked at the will, considered the case, and took their fees. Then the honestest of them, with the coolest air in the world, told me to content myself with my legacy, for the cause was hopeless; the will was sufficient to exclude a wilderness of elder sons.

* Sir Philip Sydney, who, if we may judge from the number of quotations from his works scattered in this book, seems to have been an especial favorite with Count Devereux.—Ed.

I need not add that I left this lawyer with a very contemptible opinion of his understanding. I went to another, he told me the same thing, only in a different manner, and I thought him as great a fool as his fellow practitioner. At last I chanced upon a little brisk gentleman, with a quick eye and a sharp voice, who wore a wig that carried conviction in every curl; had an independent, upright mien, and such a logical, emphatic way of expressing himself, that I was quite charmed with him. This gentleman scarce heard me out before he assured me that I had a famous case of it, that he liked making quick work, and proceeding with vigor, that he hated rogues, and delay which was the sign of a rogue, but not the necessary sign of law, that I was the most fortunate man imaginable in coming to him, and, in short, that I had nothing to do but to commence proceedings, and leave all the rest to him. I was very soon talked into this proposal, and very soon embarked in the luxurious ocean of litigation.

Having settled this business so satisfactorily, I went to receive the condolence and sympathy of St. John. Notwithstanding the arduous occupations both of pleasure and of power, in which he was constantly engaged, he had found time to call upon me very often, and to express by letter great disappointment that I had neither received nor returned his visits. Touched by the phenomenon of so much kindness in a statesman, I paid him in return the only compliment in my power, viz., I asked his advice—with a view of taking it.

"Politics—politics, my dear Count," said he, in answer to that request, "nothing like it; I will get you a seat in the House by next week, —you are just of age, I think,—Heavens! a man like you, who has learning enough for a German professor—assurance that would almost abash a Milesian—a very pretty choice of words, and a pointed way of consummating a jest—why, with you by my side, my dear Count, I will soon—"

"St. John," said I, interrupting him, "you forget I am a Catholic!"

"Ah, I did forget that," replied St. John, slowly. "Heaven help me, Count, but I am sorry your ancestors were not converted; it was a pity they should bequeath you their religion without the estate to support it, for papacy has become a terrible tax to its followers."

"I wonder," said I, "whether the earth will ever be governed by Christians, not cavillers by followers of our Saviour, not by co-operator of the devil; by men who obey the forme and 'love one another,' not by men who wal about with the latter (that roaring lion), 'seek ing whom they may devour.' Intolerance makes us acquainted with strange nonsense and folly is never so ludicrous as when asso ciated with something sacred; it is then lik Punch and his wife in Powell's puppet-show *dancing in the Ark.* For example, to tell thos who differ from us that they are in a delusion and yet to persecute them for that delusion, to equal the wisdom of our forefathers, who we are told, in the Dæmonologie of the Scot tish Solomon, 'burnt a whole monasterie o nunnes for being misled, not by men, bu *dreames!*'"

And being somewhat moved, I ran on for long time in a very eloquent strain, upon th disadvantages of intolerance; which, I woul have it, was a policy as familiar to Protestan ism now as it had been to Popery in the dar ages; quite forgetting that it is not the vice o a peculiar sect, but of a ruling party.

St. John, who thought, or affected to thin very differently from me on these subject shook his head gently, but, with his usual goo breeding, deemed it rather too sore a subje for discussion.

"I will tell you a discovery I have made, said I.

"And what is it?"

"Listen: that man is wisest who is happie —granted. What does happiness consist in Power, wealth, popularity, and, above all, con tent! Well, then, no man ever obtains s much power, so much money, so much popu larity, and, above all, such thorough sel content as a fool; a fool, therefore (this no paradox), is the wisest of men. Fools gov ern the world in purple—the wise laugh a them—but they laugh in rags. Fools thrive a court—fools thrive in state chambers—fool thrive in boudoirs—fools thrive in rich men legacies. Who is so beloved as a fool? Ever man seeks him, laughs at him, and hugs him Who is so secure in his own opinion—so hig in complacency, as a fool? *suâ virtute involvi* Hark-ye, St. John, let us turn fools—they ar the only potentates—the only philosophers o earth. Oh, motley, 'motley's your onl wear!'"

"Ha! ha!" laughed St. John; and, rising, he insisted upon carrying me with him to the rehearsal of a new play, in order, as he said, to dispel my spleen, and prepare me for ripe decision upon the plans to be adopted for bettering my fortune.

But, in good truth, nothing calculated to advance so comfortable and praiseworthy an end seemed to present itself. My religion was an effectual bar to any hope of rising in the state. Europe now began to wear an aspect that promised universal peace, and the sword which I had so poetically apostrophized was not likely to be drawn upon any more glorious engagement than a brawl with the Mohawks, any incautious noses appertaining to which fraternity I was fully resolved to slit whenever they came conveniently in my way. To add to the unpromising state of my worldly circumstances, my uncle's death had removed the only legitimate barrier to the acknowledgment of my marriage with Isora, and it became due to her to proclaim and publish that event. Now, if there be any time in the world when a man's friends look upon him most coldly, when they speak of his capacities of rising the most despondingly, when they are most inclined, in short, to set him down as a silly sort of fellow, whom it is no use inconveniencing oneself to assist, it is at that moment when he has made what the said friends are pleased to term an imprudent marriage! It was, therefore, no remarkable instance of good luck that the express time for announcing that I had contracted that species of marriage, was the express time for my wanting the assistance of those kind-hearted friends. Then, too, by the pleasing sympathies in worldly opinion, the neglect of one's friends is always so damnably neighbored by the exultation of one's foes! Never was there a man who, without being very handsome, very rude, or very much in public life, had made unto himself more enemies than it had been my lot to make. How the rascals would all sneer and coin dull jests when they saw me so down in the world! The very old maids, who, so long as they thought me single, would have declared that the will was a fraud, would, directly they heard I was married, ask if Gerald was handsome and assert, with a wise look, that my uncle knew well what he was about. Then the joy of the Lady Hasselton, and the curled lip of the haughty Tarleton! It is a very odd circumstance, but it is very true, that the people we most despise have the most influence over our actions: a man never ruins himself by giving dinners to his father, or turning his house into a palace in order to feast his bosom friend:—on the contrary, 'tis the poor devil of a friend who fares the worst, and starves on the family joint, while mine host beggars himself to banquet "that disagreeable Mr. A., who is such an insufferable ass," and mine hostess sends her husband to the Fleet by vieing with "that odious Mrs. B., who was always her aversion!"

Just in the same manner, no thought disturbed me, in the step I was about to take, half so sorely as the recollection of Lady Hasselton the coquette, and Mr. Tarleton the gambler. However, I have said somewhere or other that nothing selfish on a small scale polluted my love for Isora—nor did there. I had resolved to render her speedy and full justice; and if I sometimes recurred to the disadvantages to myself, I always had pleasure in thinking that they were *sacrifices* to her. But to my great surprise, when I first announced to Isora my intention of revealing our marriage, I perceived in her countenance, always such a traitor to her emotions, a very different expression from that which I had anticipated. A deadly paleness spread over her whole face, and a shudder seemed to creep through her frame. She attempted, however, to smile away the alarm she had created in me; nor was I able to penetrate the cause of an emotion so unlooked for. But I continued to speak of the public announcement of our union as of a thing decided; and at length she listened to me while I arranged the method of making it, and sympathized in the future projects I chalked out for us to adopt. Still, however, when I proposed a definite time for the re-celebration of our nuptials, she ever drew back, and hinted the wish for a longer delay.

"Not so soon, dear Morton," she would say tearfully, "not so soon; we are happy now, and perhaps when you are with me always, you will not love me so well!"

I reasoned against this notion, and this reluctance, but in vain; and day passed on day, and even week on week, and our marriage was still undeclared. I now lived, however, almost wholly with Isora, for busy tongues could no

longer carry my secret to my uncle; and, indeed, since I had lost the fortune which I was expected to inherit, it is astonishing how little people troubled their heads about my movements or myself. I lived then almost wholly with Isora—and did familiarity abate my love? Strange to say, it did not abate even the romance of it. The reader may possibly remember a conversation with St. John recorded in the Second Book of this history. "The deadliest foe to love," said he, (he who had known all love—that of the senses and that also of the soul!) "is not change, nor misfortune, nor jealousy, nor wrath, nor anything that flows from passion, or emanates from fortune. The deadliest foe to love, is CUSTOM!"

Was St. John right?—I believe that in most instances he was; and perhaps the custom was not continued in my case long enough for me to refute the maxim. But, as yet, the very gloss upon the god's wings was fresh as on the first day when I had acknowledged his power. Still was Isora to me the light and the music of existence! — still did my heart thrill and leap within me when her silver and fond voice made the air a blessing. Still would I hang over her, when her beautiful features lay hushed in sleep, and watch the varying hues of her cheek; and fancy, while she slept, that in each low, sweet breath that my lips drew from hers, was a whisper of tenderness and endearment! Still when I was absent from her, my soul seemed to mourn a separation from its better and dearer part, and the joyous senses of existence saddened and shrunk into a single want! Still was her presence to my heart as a breathing atmosphere of poesy which circled and tinted all human things; still was my being filled with that delicious and vague melancholy which the very excess of rapture alone produces—the knowledge we dare not breathe to ourselves that the treasure in which our heart is stored is not above the casualties of fate. The sigh that mingles with the kiss, the tear that glistens in the empassioned and yearning gaze, the deep tide in our spirit, over which the moon and the stars have power; the chain of harmony within the thought, which has a mysterious link with all that is fair, and pure, and bright in Nature, knitting as it were loveliness with love!—all this, all that I cannot express—all that to the young for whom the real world has had few spells, and the world of visions has been a home, who love at last and for the first time, —all that to them are known were still mine.

In truth, Isora was one well calculated to sustain and to rivet romance. The cast of her beauty was so dream-like, and yet so varying—her temple was so little mingled with the common characteristics of woman; it had so little of caprice, so little of vanity, so utter an absence of all jealous and all angry feeling; it was so made up of tenderness and devotion, and yet so imaginative and fairy-like in its fondness, that it was difficult to bear only the sentiments of earth, for one who had so little of earth's clay. She was more like the women whom one imagines are the creations of poetry, and yet of whom no poetry, save that of Shakspeare's, reminds us; and to this day, when I go into the world, I never see aught of our own kind which recalls her, or even one of her features, to my memory. But when I am alone with Nature, methinks a sweet sound or a newborn flower, has something of familiar power over those stored and deep impressions which do make her image, and it brings her more vividly before my eyes than any shape or face of her own sex, however beautiful it may be.

There was also another trait in her character which, though arising in her weakness, not her virtues, yet perpetuated the more dream-like and imaginary qualities of our passion: this was a melancholy superstition, developing itself in forebodings and omens which interested, because they were steeped at once in the poetry and in the deep sincerity of her nature. She was impressed with a strong and uncontrollable feeling that her fate was predestined to a dark course and an early end; and she drew from all things around her something to feed the pensive character of her thoughts. The stillness of noon—the holy and eloquent repose of twilight, its rosy sky, and its soft air, its shadows and its dews, had equally for her heart a whisper and a spell. The wan stars, where, from the eldest time, man has shaped out a chart of the undiscoverable future; the mysterious moon, to which the great ocean ministers from its untrodden shrines; the winds, which traverse the vast air, pilgrims from an eternal home to an unpenetrated bourne; the illimitable Heavens, on which none ever gazed without a vague craving for something that the earth cannot give,

and a vague sense of a former existence in which that something was enjoyed; the holy night — that solemn and circling sleep, which seems, in its repose, to image our death, and in its living worlds to shadow forth the immortal realms which only through that death we can survey;—all had, for the deep heart of Isora, a language of omen and of doom. Often would we wander alone, and for hours together, by the quiet and wild woods and streams that surrounded her retreat, and which we both loved so well; and often, when the night closed over us, with my arm around her, and our lips so near that our atmosphere was our mutual breath, would she utter, in that voice which "made the soul plant itself in the ears,"—the predictions which had nursed themselves at her heart.

I remember one evening, in especial! The rich twilight had gathered over us, and we sat by a slender and soft rivulet, overshadowed by some stunted yet aged trees. We had both, before she spoke, been silent for several minutes; and only when, at rare intervals, the birds sent from the copse that backed us a solitary and vesper note of music, was the stillness around us broken. Before us, on the opposite bank of the stream, lay a valley, in which shadow and wood concealed all trace of man's dwellings, save at one far spot, where, from a single hut, rose a curling and thin vapor,—like a spirit released from earth, and losing gradually its earthier particles, as it blends itself with the loftier atmosphere of Heaven.

It was then that Isora, clinging closer to me, whispered her forebodings of death. "You will remember," said she, smiling faintly, "you will remember me, in the lofty and bright career which yet awaits you, and I scarcely know whether I would not sooner have that memory—free as it will be from all recollection of my failings and faults, and all that I have cost you, than incur the chance of your future coldness or decrease of love."

And when Isora turned, and saw that the tears stood in my eyes, she kissed them away, and said, after a pause,

"It matters not, my own guardian angel, what becomes of me: and now that I am near you, it is wicked to let my folly cost you a single pang. But why should you grieve at my forebodings? there is nothing painful or harsh in them to me, and I interpret them thus: 'if my life passes away before the common date, perhaps it will be a sacrifice to yours.' And it will, Morton—it will. The love I bear to you I can but feebly express now; all of us wish to prove our feelings, and I would give one proof of mine for you. It seeme to me that I was made only for one purpose—to love you; and I would fain hope that my death may be some sort of sacrifice to you—some token of the ruling passion and the whole object of my life."

As Isora said this, the light of the moon, which had just risen, shone full upon her cheek, flushed as it was with a deeper tint than it usually wore; and in her eye—her features—her forehead—the lofty nature of her love seemed to have stamped the divine expression of itself.

Have I lingered too long on these passages of life,—they draw near to a close—and a more adventurous and stirring period of manhood will succeed. Ah, little could they, who in after years beheld in me but the careless yet stern soldier—the wily and callous diplomatist—the companion alternately so light and so moodily reserved—little could they tell how soft, and weak, and doting my heart was once!

CHAPTER VI.

An Unexpected Meeting—Conjecture and Anticipation.

THE day for the public solemnization of our marriage was at length appointed. In fact, the plan for the future that appeared to me most promising was to proffer my services to some foreign Court, and that of Russia held out to me the greatest temptation. I was therefore anxious, as soon as possible, to conclude the rite of a second or public nuptials, and I purposed leaving the county within a week afterwards. My little lawyer assured me that my suit would go on quite as well in my absence, and whenever my presence was necessary he would be sure to inform me of it. I did not doubt him in the least—it is a charming thing to have confidence in one's man of business.

Of Montreuil I now saw nothing; but I accidentally heard that he was on a visit to Gerald, and that the latter had already made the old walls ring with premature hospitality.

As for Aubrey, I was in perfect ignorance of his movements; and the unsatisfactory shortness of his last letter, and the wild expressions so breathing of fanaticism in the postscript, had given me much anxiety and alarm on his account. I longed above all to see him,—to talk with him over old times and our future plans, and to learn whether no new bias could be given to a temperament which seemed to lean so strongly towards a self-punishing superstition. It was about a week before the day fixed for my public nuptials, that I received at last from him the following letter:—

"My dearest Brother,

"I have been long absent from home—absent on affairs on which we will talk hereafter. I have not forgotten you, though I have been silent, and the news of my poor uncle's death has shocked me greatly. On my arrival here I learnt your disappointment and your recourse to law. I am not so much surprised, though I am as much grieved, as yourself, for I will tell you now, what seemed to me unimportant before. On receiving your letter, requesting consent to your designed marriage, my uncle seemed greatly displeased as well as vexed, and afterwards he heard much that displeased him more; from what quarter came his news I know not, and he only spoke of it in innuendos and angry insinuations. As far as I was able, I endeavored to learn his meaning, but could not, and to my praises of you I thought latterly he seemed to lend but a cold ear; he told me at last, when I was about to leave him, that you had acted ungratefully to him, and that he should alter his will. I scarcely thought of this speech at the time, or rather I considered it as the threat of a momentary anger. Possibly, however, it was the prelude to that disposition of property which has so wounded you,—I observe too that the will bears date about that period. I mention this fact to you—you can draw from it what inference you will; but I do solemnly believe that Gerald is innocent of any fraud towards you.

"I am all anxiety to hear whether your love continues. I beseech you to write to me instantly and inform me on that head as on all others. We shall meet soon.

"Your ever affectionate Brother,
"Aubrey Devereux."

There was something in this letter that vexed and displeased me: I thought it breathed a tone of unkindness and indifference, which my present circumstances rendered peculiarly inexcusable. So far, therefore, from answering it immediately, I resolved not to reply to it till after the solemnization of my marriage. The anecdote of my uncle startled me a little when I coupled it with the words my uncle had used towards myself on his death-bed; viz., in hinting that he had heard some things unfavorable to Isora, unnecessary then to repeat; but still if my uncle had altered his intentions towards me, would he not have mentioned the change and its reasons? Would he have written to me with such kindness, or received me with such affection? I could not believe that he would: and my opinions of the fraud and the perpetrator were not a whit changed by Aubrey's epistle. It was clear, however, that he had joined the party against me: and as my love for him was exceedingly great, I was much wounded by the idea.

"All leave me," said I, "upon this reverse, —all but Isora!" and I thought with renewed satisfaction on the step which was about to ensure to her a secure home and an honorable station. My fears lest Isora should again be molested by her persecutor were now pretty well at rest; having no doubt in my own mind as to that persecutor's identity, I imagined that in his new acquisition of wealth and pomp, a boyish and unreturned love would easily be relinquished; and that, perhaps, he would scarcely regret my obtaining the prize himself had sought for, when in my altered fortunes it would be followed by such worldly depreciation. In short, I looked upon him as possessing a characteristic common to most bad men, who are never so influenced by love as they are by hatred; and imagined therefore, that if he had lost the object of the love, he could console himself by exulting over any decline of prosperity in the object of the hate.

As the appointed day drew near, Isora's despondency seemed to vanish, and she listened, with her usual eagerness in whatever interested me, to my continental schemes of enterprise. I resolved that our second wedding, though public, should be modest and unostentatious, suitable rather to our fortunes than our birth. St. John, and a few old friends of the family, constituted all the party I invited, and I requested them to keep my marriage secret until the very day for celebrating it arrived. I did this from a desire of avoiding compliments intended as sarcasms, and visits rather of curiosity, than friendship. On flew the days, and it was now the one preceding my wedding. I was dressing to go out upon a matter of business connected with the ceremony, and I then, as I received my hat from Desmarais, for the first time thought it requisite to acquaint that accomplished gentleman with the rite of the morrow. Too well bred was Monsieur Des-

marais to testify any other sentiment than pleasure at the news; and he received my orders and directions for the next day with more than the graceful urbanity which made one always feel quite honored by his attentions.

"And how goes on the philosophy?" said I, —"faith, since I am about to be married, I shall be likely to require its consolations."

"Indeed, Monsieur," answered Desmarais, with that expression of self-conceit which was so curiously interwoven with the obsequiousness of his address, "indeed, Monsieur, I have been so occupied of late in preparing a little powder very essential to dress, that I have not had time for any graver, though not perhaps more important, avocations."

"Powder—and what is it?"

"Will Monsieur condescend to notice its effect?" answered Desmarais, producing a pair of gloves which were tinted of the most delicate flesh-color; the coloring was so nice that, when the gloves were on, it would have been scarcely possible, at any distance, to distinguish them from the naked flesh.

"'Tis a rare invention," said I.

"Monsieur is very good, but I flatter myself it is so," rejoined Desmarais; and he forthwith ran on far more earnestly on the merits of his powder than I had ever heard him descant on the beauties of Fatalism. I cut him short in the midst of his harangue; too much eloquence in any line is displeasing in one's dependent.

I had just concluded my business abroad, and was returning homeward with downcast eyes, and in a very abstracted mood, when I was suddenly startled by a loud voice that exclaimed in a tone of surprise: "What!—Count Devereux—how fortunate!"

I looked up, and saw a little dark man, shabbily dressed; his face did not seem unfamiliar to me, but I could not at first remember where I had seen it,—my look, I suppose, testified my want of memory, for he said, with a low bow,—

"You have forgotten me, Count, and I don't wonder at it; so please you, I am the person who once brought you a letter from France to Devereux Court."

At this, I recognized the bearer of that epistle which had embroiled me with the Abbé Montreuil. I was too glad of the meeting to show any coolness in my reception of the gentleman, and, to speak candidly, I never saw a gentleman less troubled with *mauvaise honte.*

"Sir!" said he, lowering his voice to a whisper, "it is most fortunate that I should thus have met you; I only came to town this morning, and for the sole purpose of seeking you out. I am charged with a packet, which I believe will be of the greatest importance to your interests. But," he added, looking round, "the streets are no proper place for my communication; *parbleu*, there are those about who hear whispers through stone walls—suffer me to call upon you to-morrow."

"To-morrow! it is a day of great business with me, but I can possibly spare you a few moments, if that will suffice; or, on the day after, your own pleasure may be the sole limit of our interview."

"*Parbleu, Monsieur*, you are very obliging —very; but I will tell you in one word who I am, and what is my business. My name is Marie Oswald: I was born in France, and I am the half-brother of that Oswald who drew up your uncle's will."

"Good Heavens!" I exclaimed, "is it possible that you know anything of that affair?"

"Hush—yes, all! my poor brother is just dead; and, in a word, I am charged with a packet given me by him on his death-bed. Now, will you see me if I bring it to-morrow?"

"Certainly; can I not see you to-night?"

"To-night?—No, not well; *parbleu!* I want a little consideration as to the reward due to me for my eminent services to your lordship. No: let it be to-morrow."

"Well! at what hour? I fear it must be in the evening."

"Seven, *s'il vous plait*, Monsieur."

"Enough! be it so."

And Mr. Marie Oswald, who seemed, during the whole of this short conference, to have been under some great apprehension of being seen or overheard, bowed, and vanished in an instant, leaving my mind in a most motley state of incoherent, unsatisfactory, yet sanguine conjecture.

CHAPTER VII.

The Events of a Single Night—Moments make the Hues in which Years are colored.

MEN of the old age! what wonder that in the fondness of a dim faith, and in the vague

guesses which, from the frail ark of reason, we send to hover over a dark and unfathomable abyss, — what wonder that ye should have wasted hope and life in striving to penetrate the future! What wonder that ye should have given a language to the stars, and to the night a spell, and gleaned from the uncomprehended earth an answer to the enigmas of Fate! We are like the sleepers who, walking under the influence of a dream, wander by the verge of a precipice, while, in their own deluded vision, they perchance believe themselves surrounded by bowers of roses, and accompanied by those they love. Or, rather like the blind man, who can retrace every step of the path he has *once* trodden, but who can guess not a single inch of that which he has not yet travelled, our Reason can re-guide us over the roads of past experience with a sure and unerring wisdom, even while it recoils, baffled and bewildered, before the blackness of the very moment whose boundaries we are about to enter.

The few friends I had invited to my wedding were still with me, when one of my servants, not Desmarais, informed me that Mr. Oswald waited for me. I went out to him.

"*Parbleu!*" said he, rubbing his hands, "I perceive it is a joyous time with you, and I don't wonder you can only spare me a few moments."

The estates of Devereux were not to be risked for a trifle, but I thought Mr. Marie Oswald exceedingly impertinent. "Sir," said I, very gravely, "pray be seated: and now to business. In the first place may I ask to whom I am beholden for sending you with that letter you gave me at Devereux Court? and, secondly, what that letter contained?—for I never read it."

"Sir," answered the man, "the history of the letter is perfectly distinct from that of the will, and the former (to discuss the least important first) is briefly this. You have heard, sir, of the quarrels between Jesuit and Jansenist?"

"I have."

"Well—but first, Count, let me speak of myself. There were three young men of the same age, born in the same village in France, of obscure birth each, and each desirous of getting on in the world. Two were deuced clever fellows: the third nothing particular. One of the two at present shall be nameless; the third, 'who was nothing particular' (in his own opinion, at least, though his friends may think differently), was Marie Oswald. We soon separated: I went to Paris, was employed in different occupations, and at last became secretary, and (why should I disavow it?) valet to a lady of quality, and a violent politician. She was a furious Jansenist; of course I adopted her opinions. About this time, there was much talk among the Jesuits of the great genius and deep learning of a young member of the order—Julian Montreuil. Though not residing in the country, he had sent one or two books to France, which had been published and had created a great sensation. Well, sir, my mistress was the greatest intriguante of her party: she was very rich, and tolerably liberal; and, among other packets of which a messenger from England was *carefully* robbed, between Calais and Abbeville, (you understand me, sir, *carefully* robbed: *parbleu!* I wish I were robbed in the same manner every day in my life!) was one from the said Julian Montreuil to a political friend of his. Among other letters in this packet—all of importance—was one descriptive of the English family with whom he resided. It hit them all, I am told, off to a hair; and it described, in particular, one, the supposed inheritor of the estates, a certain Morton, Count Devereux. Since you say you did not read the letter, I spare your blushes, sir, and I don't dwell upon what he said of your talent, energy, ambition, etc. I will only tell you that he dilated far more upon your prospects than your powers; and that he expressly stated what was his object in staying in your family and cultivating your friendship—he expressly stated that 30,000*l.* a year would be particularly serviceable to a certain political cause which he had strongly at heart."

"I understand you," said I; "the Chevalier's?"

"Exactly. 'This sponge,' said Montreuil, I remember the very phrase—'this sponge will be well filled, and I am handling it softly now, in order to squeeze its juices hereafter according to the uses of the party we have so strongly at heart.'"

"It was not a metaphor very flattering to my understanding," said I.

"True, sir. Well, as soon as my mistress learnt this, she remembered that your father,

the Marshal, had been one of her *plus chers amis*—in a word, if scandal says true, he had been *the cher ami*. However, she was instantly resolved to open your eyes, and ruin the *maudit Jesuite:* she enclosed the letter in an envelope, and sent me to England with it. I came—I gave it to you—and I discovered, in that moment, when the Abbé entered, that this Julian Montreuil was an old acquaintance of my own—was one of the two young men who I told you were such deuced clever fellows. Like many other adventurers, he had changed his name on entering the world, and I had never till now suspected that Julian Montreuil was Bertrand Collinot. Well, when I saw what I had done, I was exceedingly sorry, for I had liked my companion well enough not to wish to hurt him; besides, I was a little afraid of him. I took horse, and went about some other business I had to execute, nor did I visit that part of the country again, till a week ago (now I come to the other business), when I was summoned to the death-bed of my half-brother, the attorney, peace be with him! He suffered much from hypochondria in his dying moments—I believe it is the way with people of his profession—and he gave me a sealed packet, with a last injunction to place it in your hands, and your hands only. Scarce was he dead—(do not think I am unfeeling, sir, I had seen very little of him, and he was only my half-brother, my father having married, for a second wife, a foreign lady, who kept an inn, by whom he was blessed with myself)—scarce, I say, was he dead when I hurried up to town; Providence threw you in my way, and you shall have the document upon two conditions."

"Which are, first to reward you; secondly, to——"

"To promise you will not open the packet for seven days."

"The devil! and why?"

"I will tell you candidly:—one of the papers in the packet, I believe to be my brother's written confession—nay, I know it is—and it will criminate one I have a love for, and who, I am resolved, shall have a chance of escape."

"Who is that one? Montreuil?"

"No—I do not refer to him; but I cannot tell you more. I require the promise, Count—it is indispensable. If you don't give it me, *parbleu*, you shall not have the packet."

There was something so cool, so confident, and so impudent about this man, that I did not well know whether to give way to laughter or to indignation. Neither, however, would have been politic in my situation; and, as I said before, the estates of Devereux were not to be risked for a trifle.

"Pray," said I, however, with a shrewdness which I think did me credit—"pray, Mr. Marie Oswald, do you expect the reward before the packet is opened?"

"By no means," answered the gentleman, who in his own opinion was nothing particular; "by no means; nor until you and your lawyers are satisfied that the papers enclosed in the packet are sufficient fully to restore you to the heritage of Devereux Court and its demesnes."

There was something fair in this; and as the only penalty to me, incurred by the stipulated condition, seemed to be the granting escape to the criminals, I did not think it incumbent upon me to lose my cause from the desire of a prosecution. Besides, at that time, I felt too happy to be revengeful; and so, after a moment's consideration, I conceded to the proposal, and gave my honor as a gentleman, Mr. Oswald obligingly dispensed with an oath—that I would not open the packet till the end of the seventh day. Mr. Oswald then drew forth a piece of paper, on which sundry characters were inscribed, the purport of which was that, if through the papers given me by Marie Oswald, my lawyers were convinced that I could become master of my uncle's property, now enjoyed by Gerald Devereux, I should bestow on the said Marie 5000*l.*: half on obtaining this legal opinion, half on obtaining possession of the property. I could not resist a smile, when I observed that the word of a gentleman was enough surety for the safety of the man he had a love for, but that Mr. Oswald required a written bond for the safety of his reward. One is ready enough to trust one's friends to the conscience of another, but as long as a law can be had instead, one is rarely so credulous in respect to one's money.

"The reward shall be doubled, if I succeed," said I, signing the paper; and Oswald then produced a packet, on which was writ, in a trembling hand—"For Count Morton Devereux—private—and with haste." As soon as he had given me this precious charge, and reminded me again of my promise, Oswald with-

drew. I placed the packet in my bosom, and returned to my guests.

Never had my spirit been so light as it was that evening. Indeed the good people I had assembled thought matrimony never made a man so little serious before. They did not however stay long, and the moment they were gone, I hastened to my own sleeping apartment, to secure the treasure I had acquired. A small escritoire stood in this room, and in it I was accustomed to keep whatever I considered most precious. With many a wistful look and murmur at my promise, I consigned the packet to one of the drawers of this escritoire. As I was locking the drawer, the sweet voice of Desmarais accosted me. Would Monsieur, he asked, suffer him to visit a friend that evening, in order to celebrate so joyful an event in Monsieur's destiny? It was not often that he was addicted to vulgar merriment, but on such an occasion he owned that he was tempted to transgress his customary habits, and he felt that Monsieur, with his usual good taste, would feel offended if his servant, within Monsieur's own house, suffered joy to pass the limits of discretion, and enter the confines of noise and inebriety, especially as Monsieur had so positively interdicted all outward sign of extra hilarity. He implored *mille pardons* for the presumption of his request.

"It is made with your usual discretion—there are five guineas for you: go and get drunk with your friend, and be merry instead of wise. But, tell me, is it not beneath a philosopher to be moved by anything, especially anything that occurs to another,—much less to get drunk upon it?"

"Pardon me, Monsieur," answered Desmarais, bowing to the ground; "one ought to get drunk sometimes, because the next morning one is sure to be thoughtful; and, moreover, the practical philosopher ought to indulge every emotion, in order to judge how that emotion would affect another; at least, this is my opinion."

"Well, go."

"My most grateful thanks be with Monsieur; Monsieur's nightly toilet is entirely prepared."

And away went Desmarais, with the light, yet slow, step with which he was accustomed to combine elegance with dignity.

I now passed into the room I had prepared for Isora's *boudoir*. I found her leaning by the window, and I perceived that she had been in tears. As I paused to contemplate her figure, so touchingly, yet so unconsciously mournful in its beautiful and still posture, a more joyous sensation than was wont to mingle with my tenderness for her swelled at my heart. "Yes," thought I, "you are no longer the solitary exile, or the persecuted daughter of a noble but ruined race; you are not even the bride of a man who must seek in foreign climes, through danger and through hardship, to repair a broken fortune and establish an adventurer's name! At last the clouds have rolled from the bright star of your fate—wealth, and pomp, and all that awaits the haughtiest of England's matrons shall be yours." And at these thoughts, Fortune seemed to me a gift a thousand times more precious than—much as my luxuries prized it—it had ever seemed to me before.

I drew near and laid my hand upon Isora's shoulder, and kissed her cheek. She did not turn round, but strove, by bending over my hand and pressing it to her lips, to conceal that she had been weeping. I thought it kinder to favor the artifice than to complain of it. I remained silent for some moments, and I then gave vent to the sanguine expectations for the future which my new treasure entitled me to form. I had already narrated to her the adventure of the day before—I now repeated the purport of my last interview with Oswald: and, growing more and more elated as I proceeded, I dwelt at last upon the description of my inheritance, as glowingly as if I had already recovered it. I painted to her imagination its rich woods and its glassy lake, and the fitful and wandering brook that, through brake and shade, went bounding on its wild way: I told her of my early roamings, and dilated with a boy's rapture upon my favorite haunts. I brought visibly before her glistening and eager eyes the thick copse where, hour after hour, in vague verse, and still vaguer dreams, I had so often whiled away the day; the old tree which I had climbed to watch the birds in their glad mirth, or to listen unseen to the melancholy sound of the forest deer; the antique gallery and the vast hall which, by the dim twilights, I had paced with a religious awe, and looked upon the pictured forms of my bold fathers, and mused high and ardently upon my destiny to be; the

old gray tower which I had consecrated to myself, and the unwitnessed path which led to the yellow beach, and the wide gladness of the solitary sea; the little arbor which my earliest ambition had reared, that looked out upon the joyous flowers and the merry fountain, and, through the ivy and the jessamine, wooed the voice of the bird, and the murmur of the summer bee; and, when I had exhausted my description, I turned to Isora, and said in a lower tone, "And I shall visit these once more, and with you."

Isora sighed faintly, and it was not till I had pressed her to speak that she said:

"I wish I could deceive myself, Morton, but I cannot—I cannot root from my heart an impression that I shall never again quit this dull city, with its gloomy walls and its heavy air. A voice within me seems to say—'Behold from this very window the boundaries of your living wanderings!'"

Isora's words froze all my previous exaltation. "It is in vain," said I, after chiding her for her despondency, "it is in vain to tell me that you have for this gloomy notion no other reason than that of a vague presentiment. It is time now that I should press you to a greater confidence upon all points consistent with your oath to our mutual enemy than you have hitherto given me. Speak, dearest, have you not some yet unrevealed causes for alarm?"

It was but for a moment that Isora hesitated before she answered with that quick tone which indicates that we force words against the will.

"Yes, Morton, I *will* tell you now, though I would not before the event of this day. On the last day that I saw that fearful man, he said, 'I warn you, Isora D'Alvarez, that my love is far fiercer than hatred; I warn you that your bridals with Morton Devereux shall be stained with blood. Become his wife, and you perish! Yea, though I suffer hell's tortures for ever and for ever from that hour, my own hand shall strike you to the heart!' Morton, these words have thrilled through me again and again, as if again they were breathed in my very ear; and I have often started at night and thought the very knife glittered at my breast. So long as our wedding was concealed, and concealed so closely, I was enabled to quiet my fears till they scarcely seemed to exist. But when our nuptials were to be made public, when I knew that they were to reach the ears of that fierce and unaccountable being, I thought I heard my doom pronounced. This, mine own love, must excuse your Isora, if she seemed ungrateful for your generous eagerness to announce our union. And perhaps she would not have acceded to it so easily as she has done were it not that, in the first place, she felt it was beneath your wife to suffer any terror so purely selfish to make her shrink from the proud happiness of being yours in the light of day; and if she had not felt (here Isora hid her blushing face in my bosom) that she was fated to give birth to another, and that the announcement of our wedded love had become necessary to your honor as to mine!"

Though I was in reality awed even to terror by learning from Isora's lip so just a cause for her forebodings—though I shuddered with a horror surpassing even my wrath, when I heard a threat so breathing of deadly and determined passions—yet I concealed my emotions, and only thought of cheering and comforting Isora. I represented to her how guarded and vigilant should ever henceforth be the protection of her husband; that nothing should again separate him from her side; that the extreme malice and fierce persecution of this man were sufficient even to absolve her conscience from the oath of concealment she had taken; that I would procure from the sacred head of our church her own absolution from that vow; that the moment concealment was over, I could take steps to prevent the execution of my rival's threats; that, however near to me he might be in blood, no consequences arising from a dispute between us could be so dreadful as the least evil to Isora; and moreover, to appease her fears, that I would solemnly promise he should never sustain personal assault or harm from my hand; in short, I said all that my anxiety could dictate, and at last I succeeded in quieting her fears, and she smiled as brightly as the first time I had seen her in the little cottage of her father. She seemed, however, averse to an absolution from her oath, for she was especially scrupulous as to the sanctity of those religious obligations; but I secretly resolved that her safety absolutely required it, and that at all events I would procure absolution from my own promise to her.

At last Isora, turning from that topic, so darkly interesting, pointed to the heavens,

which, with their thousand eyes of light, looked down upon us. "Tell me, love," said she, playfully, as her arm embraced me yet more closely, "if, among yonder stars we could choose a home, which should we select?"

I pointed to one which lay to the left of the moon, and which, though not larger, seemed to burn with an intenser lustre than the rest. Since that night it has ever been to me a fountain of deep and passionate thought, a well wherein fears and hopes are buried, a mirror in which, in stormy times, I have fancied to read my destiny, and to find some mysterious omen of my intended deeds, a haven which I believe others have reached before me, and a home immortal and unchanging, where, when my wearied and fettered soul is escaped, as a bird, it shall flee away, and have its rest at last.

"What think you of my choice?" said I. Isora looked upward, but did not answer; and as I gazed upon her (while the pale light of heaven streamed quietly upon her face) with her dark eyes, where the tear yet lingered, though rather to soften than to dim, with her noble, yet tender features, over which hung a melancholy calm, with her lips apart, and her rich locks wreathing over her marble brow, and contrasted by a single white rose (that rose I have now—I would not lose one withered leaf of it for a kingdom!)—her beauty never seemed to me of so rare an order, nor did my soul ever yearn towards her with so deep a love.

It was past midnight. All was hushed in our bridal chamber. The single lamp, which hung above, burnt still and clear; and through the half-closed curtains of the window, the moonlight looked in upon our couch, quiet, and pure, and holy, as if it were charged with blessings.

"Hush!" said Isora, gently; "do you not hear a noise below!"

"Not a breath," said I; "I hear not a breath, save yours."

"It was my fancy, then!" said Isora, "and it has ceased now;" and she clung closer to my breast and fell asleep. I looked on her peaceful and childish countenance, with that concentrated and full delight with which we clasp all that the universe holds dear to us, and feel as if the universe held nought beside—and thus sleep also crept upon me.

I awoke suddenly; I felt Isora trembling palpably by my side. Before I could speak to her, I saw standing at a little distance from the bed, a man wrapt in a long dark cloak and masked; but his eyes shone through the mask, and they glared full upon me. He stood with his arms folded, and perfectly motionless; but at the other end of the room, before the escritoire in which I had locked the important packet, stood another man, also masked, and wrapped in a disguising cloak of similar hue and fashion. This man, as if alarmed, turned suddenly, and I perceived then that the escritoire was already opened, and that the packet was in his hand. I tore myself from Isora's clasp—I stretched my hand to the table by my bedside, upon which I had left my sword,—it was gone! No matter! I was young, strong, fierce, and the stake at hazard was great. I sprung from the bed, I precipitated myself upon the man who held the packet. With one hand I grasped at the important document, with the other I strove to tear the mask from the robber's face. He endeavored rather to shake me off than to attack me; and it was not till I had nearly succeeded in unmasking him that he drew forth a short poniard, and stabbed me in the side. The blow, which seemed purposely aimed to avoid a mortal part, staggered me, but only for an instant. I renewed my gripe at the packet—I tore it from the robber's hand, and collecting my strength, now fast ebbing away, for one effort, I bore my assailant to the ground, and fell struggling with him.

But my blood flowed fast from my wound, and my antagonist, if less sinewy than myself, had greatly the advantage in weight and size. Now for one moment I was uppermost, but in the next his knee was upon my chest, and his blade gleamed on high in the pale light of the lamp and moon. I thought I beheld my death—would to God that I had! With a piercing cry, Isora sprang from the bed, flung herself before the lifted blade of the robber, and arrested his arm. This man had, in the whole contest, acted with a singular forbearance, he did so now; he paused for a moment and dropped his hand. Hitherto the other man had not stirred from his mute position; he now moved one step towards us, brandishing a poniard like his comrade's. Isora raised her hand supplicatingly towards him, and cried out, "Spare him, spare *him!* Oh, mercy, mercy!" With one stride the murderer was

by my side; he muttered some words which passion seemed to render inarticulate; and, half pushing aside his comrade, his raised weapon flashed before my eyes, now dim and reeling, I made a vain effort to rise—the blade descended—Isora, unable to arrest it, threw herself before it—her blood, her heart's blood gushed over me—I saw and felt no more.

When I recovered my senses, my servants were round me; a deep red, wet stain upon the sofa on which I was laid brought the whole scene I had witnessed again before me—terrible and distinct. I sprang to my feet and asked for Isora; a low murmur caught my ear—I turned, and beheld a dark form stretched on the bed, and surrounded, like myself, by gazers and menials; I tottered towards that bed—my bridal bed—with a fierce gesture motioned the crowd away—I heard my name breathed audibly—the next moment I was by Isora's side. All pain, all weakness, all consciousness of my wound, of my very self, were gone—life seemed curdled into a single agonizing and fearful thought. I fixed my eyes upon hers; and though *there* the film was gathering dark and rapidly, I saw yet visible and unconquered, the deep love of that faithful and warm heart which had lavished its life for mine.

I threw my arms around her—I pressed my lips wildly to hers. "Speak—speak!" I cried, and my blood gushed over her with the effort; "in mercy speak!"

Even in death and agony, the gentle being who had been as wax unto my lightest wish, struggled to obey me. "Do not grieve for me," she said, in a tremulous and broken voice; "it *is* dearer to die for you than to live!"

Those were her last words. I felt her breath abruptly cease. The heart, pressed to mine, was still! I started up in dismay—the light shone full upon her face. O God! that I should live to write that Isora was—no more!

BOOK FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

A Re-entrance into Life through the Ebon Gate—Affliction.

MONTHS passed away before my senses returned to me. I rose from the bed of suffering and of madness, calm, collected, immoveable—altered, but tranquil. All the vigilance of justice had been employed to discover the murderers, but in vain. The packet was gone; and directly I, who alone was able to do so, recovered enough to state the loss of that document, suspicion naturally rested on Gerald, as on one whom that loss essentially benefited. He came publicly forward to anticipate inquiry. He proved that he had not stirred from home during the whole week in which the event had occurred. That seemed likely enough to others; it is the tools that work, not the instigator—the bravo, not the employer; but I, who saw in him not only the robber, but that fearful rival who had long threatened Isora that my bridals should be stained with blood, was somewhat staggered by the undeniable proofs of his absence from the scene of that night; and I was still more bewildered in conjecture by remembering that, so far as their disguises and my own hurried and confused observation could allow me to judge, the person of neither villain, still less that of Isora's murderer, corresponded with the proportions and height of Gerald. Still, however, whether mediately or immediately—whether as the executor or the designer—not a doubt remained on my mind that against his head was justice due. I directed inquiry towards Montreuil—he was abroad at the time of my recovery; but, immediately on his return, he came forward boldly and at once to meet and even to court the inquiry I had instituted; he did more—he demanded on what ground, besides my own word, it rested, that this packet had ever been in my possession; and, to my surprise and perplexity, it was utterly impossible to produce the smallest trace of Mr. Marie Oswald. His half-brother, the attorney, had died, it is true, just before the event of that night; and it was also true that he had seen Marie on his death-bed; but no other corroboration of my story could be substantiated, and no other information of the man obtained; and the partisans of Gerald were not slow in hinting at the great interest I had in forging a tale respecting a will, about the authenticity of which I was at law.

The robbers had entered the house by a back-door, which was found open. No one had perceived their entrance or exit, except Desmarais, who stated that he heard a cry—that he, having spent the greater part of the night abroad, had not been in bed above an hour before he heard it—that he rose and hurried towards my room, whence the cry came—that he met two men masked on the stairs—that he seized one, who struck him in the breast with a poniard, dashed him to the ground, and escaped—that he then immediately alarmed the house, and, the servants accompanying him, he proceeded, despite his wound, to my apartment, where he found Isora and myself bleeding and lifeless, with the escritoire broken open.

The only contradiction to this tale was, that the officers of justice found the escritoire not broken open, but unlocked; and yet the key which belonged to it was found in a pocket-book in my clothes, where Desmarais said, rightly, I always kept it. How, then, had the escritoire been unlocked? it was supposed by the master-keys peculiar to experienced burglars; this diverted suspicion into a new channel, and it was suggested that the robbery and the murder had really been committed by common

house-breakers. It was then discovered that a large purse of gold, and a diamond cross, which the escritoire contained, were gone. And a few articles of ornamental *bijouterie*, which I had retained from the wreck of my former profusion in such baubles, and which were kept in a room below stairs, were also missing. These circumstance immediately confirmed the opinion of those who threw the guilt upon vulgar and mercenary villains, and a very probable and plausible supposition was built on this hypothesis. Might not this Oswald, at best an adventurer with an indifferent reputation, have forged this story of the packet in order to obtain admission into the house, and reconnoitre, during the confusion of a wedding, in what places the most portable articles of value were stowed? a thousand opportunities, in the opening and shutting of the house-doors, would have allowed an ingenious villain to glide in; nay, he might have secreted himself in my own room, and seen the place where I had put the packet—certain would he then be that I had selected for the repository of a document I believed so important, that place where all that I most valued was secured; and hence he would naturally resolve to break open the escritoire, above all other places, which, to an uninformed robber, might have seemed not only less exposed to danger, but equally likely to contain articles of value. The same confusion which enabled him to enter and conceal himself would have also enabled him to withdraw and introduce his accomplice. This notion was rendered probable by his insisting so strongly on my not opening the packet within a certain time; had I opened it immediately, I might have perceived that a deceit had been practised, and not have hoarded it in that place of security which it was the villain's object to discover. Hence, too, in opening the escritoire, he would naturally retake the packet (which other plunderers might not have cared to steal), as well as things of more real price—naturally retake it, in order that his previous imposition might not be detected, and that suspicion might be cast upon those who would appear to have an interest in stealing a packet which I believed to be so inestimably important.

What gave a still greater color to this supposition was the fact that none of the servants had seen Oswald leave the house, though many had seen him enter. And what put his guilt beyond a doubt in the opinion of many, was his sudden and mysterious disappearance. To my mind, all these circumstances were not conclusive. Both the men seemed taller than Oswald; and I knew that that confusion, which was so much insisted upon, had not—thanks to my singular fastidiousness in those matters—existed. I was also perfectly convinced that Oswald could not have been hid in my room while I locked up the packet; and there was something in the behavior of the murderer utterly unlike that of a common robber, actuated by common motives.

All these opposing arguments were, however, of a nature to be deemed nugatory by the world, and on the only one of any importance, in their estimation, *viz.*, the height of Oswald being different from that of the robbers, it was certainly very probable that, in a scene so dreadful, so brief, so confused, I should easily be mistaken. Having therefore once flowed into this direction, public opinion soon settled into the full conviction that Oswald was the real criminal, and against Oswald was the whole strength of inquiry ultimately, but still vainly, bent. Some few, it is true, of that kind class, who love family mysteries, and will not easily forego the notion of a brother's guilt, for that of a mere vulgar house-breaker, still shook their heads, and talked of Gerald; but the suspicion was vague and partial, and it was only in the close gossip of private circles that it was audibly vented.

I had formed an opinion by no means favorable to the innocence of Mr. Jean Desmarais; and I took especial care that the Necessitarian, who would only have thought robbery and murder pieces of ill luck, should undergo a most rigorous examination. I remembered that he had seen me put the packet into the escritoire; and this circumstance was alone sufficient to arouse my suspicion. Desmarais bared his breast gracefully to the magistrate. "Would a man, sir," he said, "a man of my youth, suffer such a scar as that, if he could help it?" The magistrate laughed: frivolity is often a rogue's best policy, if he did but know it. One finds it very difficult to think a coxcomb can commit robbery and murder. Howbeit Desmarais came off triumphantly: and, immediately after this examination, which had been his second one, and instigated solely at my desire, he came to me with a blush of virtuous indig-

nation on his thin cheeks. "He did not presume," he said, with a bow profounder than ever, "to find fault with Monsieur le Comte; it was his fate to be the victim of ungrateful suspicion; but philosophical truths could not always conquer the feelings of the man, and he came to request his dismissal." I gave it him with pleasure.

I must now state my own feelings on the matter: but I shall do so briefly. In my own mind, I repeat, I was fully impressed with the conviction that Gerald was the real, and the head criminal; and thrice did I resolve to repair to Devereux Court, where he still resided, to lie in wait for him, to reproach him with his guilt, and at the sword's point in deadly combat to seek its earthly expiation. I spare the reader a narration of the terrible struggles which nature, conscience, all scruples and prepossessions of education and of blood, held with this resolution, the unholiness of which I endeavored to clothe with the name of justice to Isora. Suffice it to say that this resolution I forewent at last: and I did so more from a feeling that, despite my own conviction of Gerald's guilt, one rational doubt rested upon the circumstance that the murderer seemed to my eyes of an inferior height to Gerald, and that the person whom I had pursued on the night I had received that wound which brought Isora to my bed-side, and who, it was natural to believe, was my rival, appeared to me not only also slighter and shorter than Gerald, but of a size that seemed to tally with the murderer's.

This solitary circumstance, which contradicted my other impressions, was, I say, more effectual in making me dismiss the thought of personal revenge on Gerald, than the motives which virtue and religion should have dictated. The deep desire of vengeance is the calmest of all the passions, and it is the one which most demands certainty to the reason, before it releases its emotions, and obeys their dictates. The blow which was to do justice to Isora, I had resolved should not be dealt, till I had obtained the most utter certainty that it fell upon the true criminal. And thus, though I cherished through all time, and through all change, the burning wish for retribution, I was doomed to cherish it in secret, and not for years and years to behold a hope of attaining it. Once only I vented my feelings upon Gerald. I could not rest, or sleep, or execute the world's objects, till I had done so; but when they were thus once vented methought I could wait the will of time with a more settled patience, and I re-entered upon the common career of life more externally fitted to fulfil its duties and its aims.

That single indulgence of emotion followed immediately after my resolution of not forcing Gerald into bodily contest. I left my sword, lest I might be tempted to forget my determination. I rode to Devereux Court—I entered Gerald's chamber, while my horse stood unstalled at the gate. I said but few words, but each word was a volume. I told him to enjoy the fortune he had acquired by fraud, and the conscience he had stained with murder. "Enjoy them while you may," I said, "but know that sooner or later shall come a day, when the blood that cries from earth shall be heard in Heaven—and *your* blood shall appease it. Know, if I seem to disobey the voice at my heart, I hear it night and day—and I only live to fulfil at one time its commands."

I left him stunned and horror-stricken. I flung myself on my horse, and cast not a look behind as I rode from the towers and domains of which I had been despoiled. Never from that time would I trust myself to meet or see the despoiler. Once, directly after I had thus braved him in his usurped hall, he wrote to me. I returned the letter unopened. Enough of this; the reader will now perceive what was the real nature of my feelings of revenge; and will appreciate the reasons which, throughout this history, will cause me never or rarely to recur to those feelings again, until at least he will perceive a just hope of their consummation.

I went with a quiet air and a set brow into the world. It was a time of great political excitement. Though my creed forbade me the open senate, it could not deprive me of the veiled intrigue. St. John found ample employment for my ambition, and I entered into the toils and objects of my race with a seeming avidity, more eager and engrossing than their own. In what ensues, you will perceive a great change in the character of my memoirs. Hitherto, I chiefly portrayed to you *myself*. I bared open to you my heart and temper—my passions, and the thoughts which belong to our passions. I shall now rather being before you the natures and the minds of others. The lover and the dreamer are no more. The sati-

rist and the observer—the derider of human follies, participating while he derides—the worldly and keen actor in the human drama, —these are what the district of my history on which you enter will portray me. From whatever pangs to me the change may have been wrought, you will be the gainer by that change. The gaudy dissipation of courts; the vicissitudes and the vanities of those who haunt them; the glittering jest, and the light strain; the passing irony, or the close reflection; the characters of the great; the colloquies of wit;—these are what delight the temper and amuse the leisure more than the solemn narrative of fated love. As the monster of the Nile is found beneath the sunniest banks, and in the most freshening wave, the stream may seem to wander on in melody and mirth—the ripple and the beam; but *who* shall tell what lurks, dark, and fearful, and ever vigilant, below!

CHAPTER II.

Ambitious Projects.

It is not my intention to write a political history, instead of a private biography. No doubt in the next century, there will be volumes enough written in celebration of that era which my contemporaries are pleased to term the greatest that in modern times has ever existed. Besides, in the private and more concealed intrigues with which I was engaged with St. John, there was something which regard for others would compel me to preserve in silence. I shall therefore briefly state that, in 1712, St. John dignified the peerage by that title which his exile and his genius have rendered so illustrious.

I was with him on the day this honor was publicly announced. I found him walking to and fro his room, with his arms folded, and with a very peculiar compression of his nether lip, which was a custom he had when anything greatly irritated or disturbed him.

"Well," said he, stopping abruptly as he saw me, "well, considering the peacock Harley brought so bright a plume to his own nest, we must admire the generosity which spared this gay dunghill feather to mine!"

"How!" said I, though I knew the cause of his angry metaphor. St. John used metaphors in speech scarcely less than in writing.

"How!" cried the new peer, eagerly, and with one of those flashing looks which made his expression of indignation the most powerful I ever saw. "How! Was the sacred promise granted to me of my own collateral earldom, to be violated; and while the weight —the toil—the difficulty—the odium, of affairs, from which Harley, the despotic dullard, shrunk alike in imbecility and fear, had been left exclusively to my share, an insult in the shape of an honor, to be left exclusively to my reward? You know my disposition is not to over-rate the mere baubles of ambition—you know I care little for titles and for orders in themselves; but the most worthless thing becomes of consequence, if made a symbol of what is of value, or designed as the token of an affront. Listen: a collateral earldom falls vacant—it is partly promised me. Suddenly I am dragged from the House of Commons, where I all powerful; I am given—not this earldom, which, as belonging to my house, would alone have induced me to consent to a removal from a sphere where my enemies allow I had greater influence than any single commoner in the kingdom—I am given, not this, but a miserable compromise of distinction—a new and an inferior rank—given it against my will—thrust into the Upper House, to defend what this pompous driveller, Oxford, is forced to forsake; and not only exposed to all the obloquy of a most infuriate party, opposed to me, but mortified by an intentional affront from the the party which, heart and soul, I have supported. You know that my birth is to the full as noble as Harley's—you know that my influence in the Lower House is far greater—you know that my name in the country, nay, throughout Europe, is far more popular—you know that the labor allotted to me has been far more weighty—you know that the late Peace of Utrecht is entirely my framing—that the foes to the measure direct all their venom against me—that the friends of the measure heap upon me all the honor:—when, therefore, this exact time is chosen for breaking a promise formerly made to me—when a pretended honor, known to be most unpalatable to me, is thrust upon me—when, at this very time, too, six vacant ribbons of the garter flaunt by me—one resting on the knee of this Harley, who was

able to obtain an earldom for himself—the others given to men of far inferior pretensions, though not inferior rank, to my own—myself markedly, glaringly passed by,—how can I avoid feeling that things, despicable in themselves, are become of a vital power, from the evident intention that they should be insults to me! The insects we despise as they buzz around us become dangerous when they settle on ourselves and we feel their sting! But," added Bolingbroke, suddenly relapsing into a smile, "I have long wanted a nickname, I have now found one for myself. You know Oxford is called 'The Dragon;' well, henceforth call me 'St. George;' for, as sure as I live, will I overthrow the Dragon. I say this in jest, but I mean it in earnest. And now that I have discharged my bile, let us talk of this wonderful poem, which, though I have read it a hundred times, I am never wearied of admiring."

"Ah—the Rape of the Lock! It is indeed beautiful, but I am not fond of poetry now. By the way, how is it that all our modern poets speak to the taste, the mind, the judgment, and never to the *feelings?* Are they right in doing so?"

"My friend, we are now in a polished age. What have feelings to do with civilization?"

"Why, more than you will allow. Perhaps the greater our civilization, the more numerous our feelings. Our animal passions lose in excess, but our mental gain; and it is to the mental that poetry should speak. Our English muse, even in this wonderful poem, seems to me to be growing, like our English beauties, too glitteringly artificial—it wears rouge and a hoop!"

"Ha! ha!—yes, they ornament now, rather than create—cut drapery, rather than marble. Our poems remind me of the ancient statues. Phidias made them, and Bubo and Bombax dressed them in purple. But this does not apply to young Pope, who has shown in this very poem that he can work the quarry as well as choose the gems. But see, the carriage awaits us. I have worlds to do,—first there is Swift to see—next, there is some exquisite Burgundy to taste—then, too, there is the new actress; and, by the by, you must tell me what you think of Bentley's Horace: we will drive first to my bookseller's to see it—Swift shall wait—Heavens! how he would rage if he heard me. I was going to say what a pity it is that that man should have so much littleness of vanity; but I should have uttered a very foolish sentiment if I had!"

"And why?"

"Because, if he had not so much littleness perhaps he would not be so great: what, but vanity, makes a man write and speak, and slave, and become famous? Alas!" and here St. John's countenance changed from gaiety to thought; "'tis a melancholy thing in human nature that so little is good and noble, both in itself and in its source! Our very worst passions will often produce sublimer effects than our best. Phidias (we will apply to him for another illustration), made the wonderful statue of Minerva for his country; but, in order to avenge himself on that country, he eclipsed it in the far more wonderful statue of the Jupiter Olympius. Thus, from a vicious feeling emanated a greater glory than from an exalted principle; and the artist was less celebrated for the monument of his patriotism than for that of his revenge! But *allons mon cher*, we grow wise and dull. Let us go to choose our Burgundy and our comrades to share it."

However, with his characteristic affectation of bounding ambition, and consequently hope, to no one object in particular, and of mingling affairs of light importance with those of the most weighty, Lord Bolingbroke might pretend not to recur to, or to dwell upon, his causes of resentment—from that time they never ceased to influence him to a great, and for a statesman, an unpardonable, degree. We cannot, however, blame politicians for their hatred, until, without hating anybody, we have for a long time been politicians ourselves; strong minds have strong passions, and men of strong passions must hate as well as love.

The next two years passed, on my part, in perpetual intrigues of diplomacy, combined with an unceasing, though secret, endeavor to penetrate the mystery which hung over the events of that dreadful night. All, however, was in vain. I know not what the English police may be hereafter, but, in my time, its officers seem to be chosen, like honest Dogberry's companions, among "the most senseless and fit men." They are, however, to the full, as much knaves as fools; and perhaps a wiser posterity will scarcely believe that, when things of the greatest value are stolen, the

owners, on applying to the chief magistrate, will often be told that no redress can be given there, while one of the officers will engage to get back the goods, upon paying the thieves a certain sum in exchange—if this is refused—your effects are gone for ever! A pretty state of internal government.

It was about a year after the murder that my mother informed me of an event which tore from my heart its last private tie, viz., the death of Aubrey. The last letter I had received from him has been placed before the reader; it was written at Devereux Court, just before he left it for ever. Montreuil had been with him during the illness which proved fatal, and which occurred in Ireland. He died of consumption; and when I heard from my mother that Montreuil dwelt most glowingly upon the devotion he had manifested during the last months of his life, I could not help fearing that the morbidity of his superstition had done the work of physical disease. On this fatal news, my mother retired from Devereux Court to a company of ladies of our faith, who resided together, and practised the most ascetic rules of a nunnery, though they gave not to their house that ecclesiastical name. My mother had long meditated this project, and it was now a melancholy pleasure to put it into execution. From that period I rarely heard from her, and by little and little she so shrunk from all worldly objects that my visits, and I believe even those of Gerald, became unwelcome and distasteful.

As to my lawsuit, it went on gloriously, according to the assertions of my brisk little lawyer, who had declared so emphatically that he liked making quick work of a suit. And, at last, what with bribery and feeing, and pushing, a day was fixed for the final adjustment of my claim—it came—the cause was heard and lost. I should have been ruined, but for one circumstance; the old lady, my father's godmother, who had witnessed my first and concealed marriage, left me a pretty estate near Epsom. I turned it into gold, and it was fortunate that I did so soon, as the reader is about to see.

The queen died—and a cloud already began to look menacing to the eyes of the Viscount Bolingbroke, and therefore to those of the Count Devereux. "We will weather out the shower," said Bolingbroke.

"Could not you," said I, "make our friend Oxford the Talapat?" * and Bolingbroke laughed. All men find wit in the jests broken on their enemies!

One morning, however, I received a laconic note from him, which, notwithstanding its shortness and seeming gaiety, I knew well signified that something, not calculated for laughter, had occurred. I went, and found that his new majesty had deprived him of the seals and secured his papers. We looked very blank at each other. At last, Bolingbroke smiled. I must say that, culpable as he was in some points as a politician—culpable, not from being ambitious (for I would not give much for the statesman who is otherwise), but from not having inseparably linked his ambition to the welfare of his country, rather than to that of a party—for, despite of what has been said of him, his ambition was never selfish—culpable as he was when glory allured him, he was most admirable when danger assailed him! † and,

* A thing used by the Siamese for the same purpose as we now use the umbrella. A work descriptive of Siam, by M. de la Loubere, in which the Talapat is somewhat minutely described, having been translated into English, and having excited some curiosity, a few years before Count Devereux now uses the word, the allusion was probably familiar.—Ed.

† I know well that it has been said otherwise, and that Bolingbroke has been accused of timidity for not staying in England, and making Mr. Robert Walpole a present of his head. The elegant author of "De Vere," has fallen into a very great, though a very hacknied error, in lauding Oxford's political character, and condemning Bolingbroke's, because the former awaited a trial, and the latter shunned it. A very little reflection might, perhaps, have taught the accomplished novelist that there could be no comparison between the two cases, because there was no comparison between the relative *danger* of Oxford and Bolingbroke. Oxford, as their subsequent impeachment proved, was far more numerously and powerfully supported than his illustrious enemy; and there is really no earthly cause for doubting the truth of Bolingbroke's assertion, viz., that "He had received repeated and certain information that a resolution was taken, by those who had power to execute it, to pursue him to the scaffold." There are certain situations in which a brave and a good man should willingly surrender life; but I humbly opine that there may sometimes exist a situation in which he should preserve it: and if ever man was placed in that latter situation, it was Lord Bolingbroke. To choose *unnecessarily* to put one's head under the axe, without benefiting any but one's enemies by the act, is, in my eyes, the proof of a fool, not a hero; and to attack a man for not placing his head in that agreeable and most useful predicament—for preferring, in short, to live for a world, rather than to perish by a faction, appears to be a mode of arguing that has a wonderful resemblance to nonsense. When Lord Bolingbroke was

by the shade of that Tully whom he so idolized, his philosophy was the most conveniently worn of any person's I ever met. When it would have been in the way—at the supper of an actress—in the levées of a court—in the boudoir of a beauty—in the arena of the senate—in the intrigue of the cabinet, you would not have observed a seam of the good old garment. But directly it was wanted—in the hour of pain—in the day of peril—in the suspense of exile—in (worst of all) the torpor of tranquillity, my extraordinary friend unfolded it piece by piece—wrapped himself up in it—sat down—defied the world, and uttered the most beautiful sentiments upon the comfort and luxury of his raiment, that can possibly be imagined. It used to remind me, that same philosophy of his, of tbe enchanted tent in the Arabian Tale, which one moment lay wrapped in a nut-shell, and the next covered an army.

Bolingbroke smiled, and quoted Cicero, and after an hour's conversation, which on his part was by no means like that of a person whose very head was in no enviable state of safety, he slid at once from a sarcasm upon Steele into a discussion as to the best measures to be adopted. Let me be brief on this point! Throughout the whole of that short session, he behaved in a manner more delicately and profoundly wise than, I think, the whole of his previous administration can equal. He sustained with the most unflagging, the most unwearied, dexterity, the sinking spirits of his associates. Without an act, or the shadow of an act, that could be called time-serving, he laid himself out to conciliate the king, and to propitiate parliament; with a dignified prudence which, while it seemed above petty pique, was well calculated to remove the appearance of that disaffection with which he was charged, and discriminated justly between the king and the new administration, he lent his talents to the assistance of the monarch, by whom his impeachment was already resolved on, and aided in the settlement of the civil list, while he was in full expectation of a criminal accusation.

The new parliament met, and all doubt was over. An impeachment of the late administration was decided upon. I was settling bills with my little lawyer one morning, when Bolingbroke entered my room. He took a chair, nodded to me not to dismiss my assistant, joined our conversation, and when conversation was merged in accounts, he took up a book of songs, and amused himself with it till my business was over and my disciple of Coke retired. He then said, very slowly, and with a slight yawn—"You have never been at Paris, I think?"

"Never—you are enchanted with that gay city."

"Yes, but when I was last there, the good people flattered my vanity enough to bribe my taste. I shall be able to form a more unbiassed and impartial judgment in a few days."

"A few days!"

"Ay, my dear count: does it startle you? I wonder whether the pretty *De Tencin* will be as kind to me as she was, and whether *tout le monde* (that most exquisite phrase for five hundred people), will rise now at the Opera on my entrance. Do you think that a banished minister can have any, the smallest, resemblance, to what he was when in power? By gumdragon, as our friend Swift so euphoniously and elegantly says, or swears, by gumdragon, I think not! What altered Satan so after his fall? What gave him horns and a tail? nothing but his disgrace. Oh! years, and disease, plague, pestilence, and famine, never alter a man so much as the loss of power."

"You say wisely; but what am I to gather from your words? is it all over with us in real earnest?"

"Us! with *me* it is indeed all over—*you* may stay here for ever. *I* must fly—a packet boat to Calais, or a room in the Tower—I must choose between the two. I had some thoughts of remaining—and confronting my trial, but it would be folly—there is a difference between Oxford and me. He has friends, though out of power; I have none. If they impeach him—he will escape; if they impeach me, they will either shut me up like a rat in a cage, for twenty years, till, old and forgotten, I tear my heart out with my confinement, or they will bring me at once to the block. No, no—I must keep myself for another day; and, while they banish me, I will leave the seeds of the

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impeached, two men only out of those numerous retainers in the Lower House who had been wont so loudly to applaud the secretary of state, in his prosecution of those very measures for which he was now to be condemned—two men only (General Ross and Mr. Hungerford), utttered a single syllable in defence of the minister disgraced.—Ed.

true cause to grow up till my return. Wise and exquisite policy of my foes—'Frustra Cassium amovisti, si gliscere et vigere Brutorum emulos passurus es.' * But I have no time to lose—farewell, my friend—God bless you—you are saved from these storms; and even intolerance, which prevented the exercise of your genius, preserves you now from the danger of having applied that genius to the welfare of your country: Heaven knows, whatever my faults, I have sacrificed what I loved better than all things—study and pleasure—to her cause. In her wars I served even my enemy Marlborough, in order to serve her; her peace I effected, and I suffer for it. Be it so, I am

'Fidens animi atque in utrumque paratus.' †

Once more I embrace you—farewell."

"Nay," said I, "listen to me, you shall not go alone. France is already, in reality, my native country; there did I receive my birth, it is no hardship to return to my *natale solum*—it is an honor to return in the company of Henry St. John. I will have no refusal; my law case is over, my papers are few, my money I will manage to transfer. Remember the anecdote you told me, yesterday, of Anaxagoras, who, when asked where his country was, pointed with his finger to heaven. It is applicable, I hope, as well to me as to yourself; to me, uncelebrated and obscure, to you, the senator and the statesman."

In vain Bolingbroke endeavored to dissuade me from this resolution; he was the only friend fate had left me, and I was resolved that misfortune should not part us. At last he embraced me tenderly, and consented to what he could not resist. "But you cannot," he said, "quit England to-morrow night, as I must."

"Pardon me," I answered, "the briefer the preparation, the greater the excitement, and what in life is equal to *that?*"

"True," answered Bolingbroke; "to some natures, too restless to be happy, excitement can compensate for all; compensate for years wasted, and hopes scattered—compensate for bitter regret at talents perverted and passions unrestrained. But we will talk philosophically when we have more leisure. You will dine with me to-morrow; we will go to the play together—I promised poor Lucy that I would see her at the theatre, and I cannot break my word—and an hour afterwards we will commence our excursion to Paris. And now I will explain to you the plan I have arranged for our escape."

CHAPTER III.

The real Actors Spectators of the false ones.

It was a brilliant night at the theatre. The boxes were crowded to excesss. Every eye was directed towards Lord Bolingbroke, who, with his usual dignified and consummate grace of manner, conversed with the various loiterers with whom, from time to time, his box was filled.

"Look yonder," said a very young man, of singular personal beauty, "look yonder, my lord, what a panoply of smiles the Duchess wears to-night, and how triumphantly she directs those eyes, which they say were once so beautiful, to your box."

"Ah," said Bolingbroke, "her grace does me too much honor; I must not neglect to acknowledge her courtesy;" and, leaning over the box, Bolingbroke watched his opportunity till the Duchess of Marlborough, who sat opposite to him, and who was talking with great and evidently joyous vivacity to a tall, thin man, beside her, directed her attention, and that of her whole party, in a fixed and concentrated stare, to the emperilled minister. With a dignified smile Lord Bolingbroke then put his hand to his heart, and bowed profoundly; the Duchess looked a little abashed, but returned the courtesy quickly and slightly, and renewed her conversation.

"Faith, my lord," cried the young gentleman who had before spoken, "you managed that well! No reproach is like that which we clothe in a smile, and present with a bow."

"I am happy," said Lord Bolingbroke, "that my conduct receives the grave support of a son of my political opponent."

"*Grave* support, my lord! you are mistaken—never apply the epithet grave to anything belonging to Philip Wharton. But, in

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* Vainly have you banished Cassius, if you shall suffer the rivals of the Brutuses to spread themselves and flourish.

† Confident of soul and prepared for either fortune.

sober earnest, I have sat long enough with you to terrify all my friends, and must now show my worshipful face in another part of the house. Count Devereux, will you come with me to the Duchess's?"

"What! the Duchess's immediately after Lord Bolingbroke's!—the Whig after the Tory—it would be as trying to one's assurance as a change from the cold bath to the hot to one's constitution."

"Well, and what so delightful as a trial in which one triumphs? and a change in which one does not lose even one's countenance?"

"Take care, my lord," said Bolingbroke, laughing; "those are dangerous sentiments for a man like you, to whom the hopes of two great parties are directed, to express so openly, even on a trifle, and in a jest."

"'Tis for that reason I utter them. I like being the object of hope and fear to men, since my miserable fortune made me marry at fourteen, and cease to be aught but a wedded thing to the women. But, sup with me at the Bedford—you, my lord, and the Count."

"And you will ask Walpole, Addison, and Steele,* to join us; eh?" said Bolingbroke. "No, we have other engagements for to-night; but we shall meet again soon."

And the eccentric youth nodded his adieu, disappeared, and a minute afterwards was seated by the side of the Duchess of Marlborough.

"There goes a boy," said Bolingbroke, "who, at the age of fifteen, has in him the power to be the greatest man of his day, and in all probability will only be the most singular. An obstinate man is sure of doing well; a wavering or a whimsical one (which is the same thing) is as uncertain, even in his elevation, as a shuttlecock. But look to the box at the right—do you see the beautiful Lady Mary?"

"Yes," said Mr. Trefusis, who was with us, "she has only just come to town. 'Tis said she and Ned Montague live like doves."

"How!" said Lord Bolingbroke; "that quick, restless eye seems to have very little of the dove in it."

"But how beautiful she is!" said Trefusis, admiringly. "What a pity that those exquisite hands should be so dirty! It reminds me" (Trefusis loved a coarse anecdote) "of her answer to old Madame de Noailles, who made exactly the same remark to her. 'Do you call my hands dirty?' cried Lady Mary, holding them up with the most innocent *naïveté*, 'Ah, Madame, *si vous pouviez voir mes pieds!*'"

"*Fi donc!*" said I, turning away; "but who is that very small, deformed man behind her,—he with the bright black eye?"

"Know you not?" said Bolingbroke; "tell it not in Gath!—'tis a rising sun, whom I have already learned to worship—the young author of the 'Essay on Criticism,' and the 'Rape of the Lock.' Egad the little poet seems to eclipse us with the women as much as with the men. Do you mark how eagerly Lady Mary listens to him, even though the tall gentleman in black, who in vain endeavors to win her attentions, is thought the handsomest gallant in London? Ah, Genius is paid by smiles from all females but Fortune; little, methinks, does that young poet, in his first intoxication of flattery and fame, guess what a lot of contest and strife is in store for him. The very breath which a literary man respires is hot with hatred, and the youthful proselyte enters that career which seems to him so glittering, even as Dame Pliant's brother in the Alchemist entered town—not to be fed with luxury, and diet on pleasure, but 'to learn to quarrel and live by his wits.'"

The play was now nearly over. With great gravity Lord Bolingbroke summoned one of the principal actors to his box, and bespoke a play for the next week: leaning then on my arm, he left the theatre. We hastened to his home, put on our disguises, and, without any adventure worth recounting, effected our escape, and landed safely at Calais.

CHAPTER IV.

Paris—A Female Politician, and an Ecclesiastical One—Sundry other Matters.

THE ex-minister was received both at Calais and at Paris with the most gratifying honors—he was then entirely the man to captivate the French. The beauty of his person, the grace of his manner, his consummate taste in all things, the exceeding variety and sparkling vivacity of his conversation, enchanted them.

* All political opponents of Lord Bolingbroke.

In later life he has grown more reserved and profound, even in habitual intercourse, and attention is now fixed to the solidity of the diamond, as at that time one was too dazzled to think of any thing but its brilliancy.

While Bolingbroke was receiving visits of state, I busied myself in inquiring after a certain Madame de Balzac. The reader will remember that the envelope of that letter which Oswald had brought to me at Devereux Court was signed by the letters C. de B. Now, when Oswald disappeared, after that dreadful night to which even now I can scarcely bring myself to allude, these initials occurred to my remembrance, and Oswald having said they belonged to a lady formerly intimate with my father, I inquired of my mother if she could guess to what French lady such initials would apply. She, with an evident pang of jealousy, mentioned à Madame de Balzac; and to this lady I now resolved to address myself, with the faint hope of learning from her some intelligence respecting Oswald. It was not difficult to find out the abode of one who in her day had played no inconsiderable *rôle* in that Comedy of Errors,—the Great World. She was still living at Paris; what Frenchwoman would, if she could help it, live any where else? "There are a hundred gates," said the witty Madame de Choisi to me, "which lead into Paris, but only two roads out of it,—the convent, or (odious word!) the grave."

I hastened to Madame Balzac's hotel. I was ushered through three magnificent apartments into one, which to my eyes seemed to contain a throne: upon a nearer inspection I discovered it was a bed. Upon a large chair, by a very bad fire—it was in the month of March—sat a tall, handsome woman, excessively painted, and dressed in a manner which to my taste, accustomed to English finery, seemed singularly plain. I had sent in the morning to request permission to wait on her, so that she was prepared for my visit. She rose, offered me her cheek, kissed mine, shed several tears, and in short testified a great deal of kindness towards me. Old ladies, who have flirted with our fathers, always seem to claim a sort of property in the sons!

Before she resumed her seat she held me out at arm's length. "You have a family likeness to your brave father," said she, with a little disappointment; "but—"

"Madame de Balzac would add," interrupted I, filling up the sentence which I saw her *bienveillance* had made her break off, "Madame de Balzac would add that I am not so good-looking. It is true; the likeness is transmitted to me within rather than without; and if I have not my father's privilege to be admired, I have at least his capacities to admire," and I bowed.

Madame de Balzac took three large pinches of snuff. "That is very well said," said she gravely: "very well indeed! not at all like your father, though, who never paid a compliment in his life. Your clothes, by the by, are in exquisite taste: I had no idea that English people had arrived at such perfection in the fine arts. Your face is a little too long! You admire Racine, of course? How do you like Paris?"

All this was not said gaily or quickly: Madame de Balzac was by no means a gay or a quick person. She belonged to a peculiar school of Frenchwomen, who affected a little languor, a great deal of stiffness, an indifference to forms when forms were to be used by themselves, and an unrelaxing demand of forms when forms were to be observed to them by others. Added to this, they talked plainly upon all matters, without ever entering upon sentiment. This was the school she belonged to; but she possessed the traits of the individual as well as of the species. She was keen, ambitious, worldly, not unaffectionate, nor unkind; very proud, a little of the devotee—because it was the fashion to be so—an enthusiastic admirer of military glory, and a most prying, searching, intriguing, schemer of politics without the slightest talent for the science.

"Like Paris!" said I, answering only the last question, and that not with the most scrupulous regard to truth. "Can Madame de Balzac think of Paris, and not conceive the transport which must inspire a person entering it for the first time? But I had something more endearing than a stranger's interest to attach me to it; I longed to express to my father's friend my gratitude for the interest which I venture to believe she on one occasion manifested towards me."

"Ah! you mean my caution to you against that terrible De Montreuil. Yes, I trust I was of service to you *there*."

And Madame de Balzac then proceeded to

favor me with the whole history of the manner in which she had obtained the letter she had sent me, accompanied by a thousand anathemas against those *atroces Jésuites*, and a thousand eulogies on her own genius and virtues. I brought her from this subject, so interesting to herself, as soon as decorum would allow me: and I then made inquiry if she knew aught of Oswald, or could suggest any mode of obtaining intelligence respecting him. Madame de Balzac hated plain, blunt, blank questions, and she always travelled through a wilderness of parentheses, before she answered them. But at last I did ascertain her answer, and found it utterly unsatisfactory. She had never seen nor heard any thing of Oswald since he had left her charged with her commission to me. I then questioned her respecting the character of the man, and found Mr. Marie Oswald had little to plume himself upon in that respect. He seemed, however, from her account of him, to be more a rogue than a villain; and, from two or three stories of his cowardice, which Madame de Balzac related, he appeared to me utterly incapable of a design so daring and systematic as that of which it pleased all persons who troubled themselves about my affairs, to suspect him.

Finding, at last, that no further information was to be gained on this point, I turned the conversation to Montreuil. I found, from Madame de Blazac's very abuse of him, that he enjoyed a great reputation in the country, and a great favor at court. He had been early befriended by Father la Chaise, and he was now especially trusted and esteemed by the successor of that Jesuit, Le Tellier;—Le Tellier, that rigid and bigoted servant of Loyola—the sovereign of the king himself—the destroyer of the Port Royal, and the mock and terror of the be-devilled and persecuted Jansenists. Besides this, I learnt what has been before pretty clearly evident—viz. that Montreuil was greatly in the confidence of the Chevalier, and that he was supposed already to have rendered essential service to the Stuart cause. His reputation had increased with every year, and was as great for private sanctity as for political talent.

When this information, given in a very different spirit from that in which I retail it, was over, Madame de Balzac observed—"Doubtless you will obtain a private audience with the king?"

"Is it possible, in his present age and infirmities?"

"It ought to be, to the son of the brave Marshal Devereux."

"I shall be happy to receive Madame's instructions how to obtain the honor: her name would, I feel, be a greater passport to the royal presence than that of a deceased soldier; and Venus's cestus may obtain that grace which would never be accorded to the truncheon of Mars!"

Was there ever so natural and so easy a compliment? My Venus of fifty smiled.

"You are mistaken, Count," said she; "I have no interest at court: the Jesuits forbid that to a Jansenist: but I will speak this very day to the Bishop of Fréjus: he is related to me, and will obtain so slight a boon for you with ease. He has just left his bishopric: you know how he hated it. Nothing could be pleasanter than his signing himself, in a letter to Cardinal Quirini—'*Fleuri, eveque de Frejus par l'indignation divine.*' The king does not like him much; but he is a good man on the whole, though Jesuitical; he shall introduce you."

I expressed my gratitude for the favor, and hinted that possibly the relations of my father's first wife, the haughty and ancient house of La Tremouille, might save the Bishop of Fréjus from the pain of exerting himself on my behalf.

"You are very much mistaken," answered Madame de Balzac: "priests point the road to court, as well as to heaven; and warriors and nobles have as little to do with the former as they have with the latter, the unlucky Duc de Villars only excepted—a man whose ill fortune is enough to destroy all the laurels of France. *Ma foi!* I believe the poor Duke might rival in luck that Italian poet who said, in a fit of despair, that if he had been bred a hatter, men would have been born without heads."

And Madame de Balzac chuckled over this joke till, seeing that no farther news was to be gleaned from her, I made my adieu, and my departure.

Nothing could exceed the kindness manifested towards me by my father's early connections. The circumstance of my accompanying Bolingbroke, joined to my age, and an address which, if not animated nor gay, had not been acquired without some youthful cultivation of

the graces, gave me a sort of *eclat* as well as consideration. And Bolingbroke, who was only jealous of superiors in power, and who had no equals in anything else, added greatly to my reputation by his panegyrics.

Everyone sought me—and the attention of society at Paris would, to most, be worth a little trouble to repay. Perhaps, if I had liked it, I might have been the rage; but that vanity was over. I contented myself with being admitted into society as an observer, without a single wish to become the observed. When one has once outlived the ambition of fashion I know not a greater affliction than an over-attention; and the Spectator did just what I should have done in a similar case, when he left his lodgings, "because he was asked every morning how he had slept." In the immediate vicinity of the court, the king's devotion, age, and misfortunes, threw a damp over society; but there were still some sparkling circles, who put the king out of the mode, and declared that the defeats of his generals made capital subjects for epigrams. What a delicate and subtle air did hang over those *soirees*, where all that were bright and lovely, and noble and gay, and witty and wise, were assembled in one brilliant cluster! Imperfect as my rehearsals must be, I think the few pages I shall devote to a description of these glittering conversations must still retain something of that original piquancy which the *soirees* of no other capital could rival or appreciate.

One morning, about a week after my interview with Madame de Balzac, I received a note from her, requesting me to visit her that day, and appointing the hour.

Accordingly I repaired to the house of the fair politician. I found her with a man in a clerical garb, and of a benevolent and prepossessing countenance. She introduced him to me as the Bishop of Fréjus, and he received me with an air very uncommon to his countrymen, viz., with an ease that seemed to result from real good nature, rather than artificial grace.

"I shall feel," said he, quietly, and without the least appearance of paying a compliment, "very glad to mention your wish to his Majesty; and I have not the least doubt but that he will admit to his presence one who has such hereditary claims on his notice. Madame de Maintenon, by the way, has charged me to present you to her, whenever you will give me the opportunity. She knew your admirable mother well, and, for her sake, wishes once to see you. You know, perhaps, Monsieur, that the extreme retirement of her life renders this message from Madame de Maintenon an unusual and rare honor."

I expressed my thanks;—the bishop received them with a paternal rather than a courtier-like air, and appointed a day for me to attend him to the palace. We then conversed a short time upon indifferent matters, which, I observed, the good bishop took especial pains to preserve clear from French politics. He asked me, however, two or three questions about the state of parties in England—about finance and the national debt—about Ormond and Oxford; and appeared to give the most close attention to my replies. He smiled once or twice, when his relation, Madame de Balzac, broke out into sarcasms against the Jesuits, which had nothing to do with the subjects in question.

"Ah, *ma chère cousine*," said he, "you flatter me by showing that you like me not as the politician, but the private relation—not as the Bishop of Fréjus, but as André de Fleuri."

Madame de Balzac smiled, and answered by a compliment. She was a politician for the kingdom, it is true, but she was also a politician for herself. She was far from exclaiming, with Pindar, "Thy business, O my city, I prefer willingly to my own." Ah, there is a nice distinction between politics and policy, and Madame de Balzac knew it. The distinction is this: Politics is the art of being wise for others! Policy is the art of being wise for oneself.

From Madame de Balzac's I went to Bolingbroke. "I have just been offered the place of Secretary of State, by the English king on this side of the water," said he;—"I do not, however, yet like to commit myself so fully. And, indeed, I am not unwilling to have a little relaxation of pleasure, after all these dull and dusty travails of state. Why say you to Boulainvilliers to-night—you are asked?"

"Yes! all the wits are to be there—Anthony Hamilton—and Fontenelle—young Arouet—Chaulieu, that charming old man. Let us go, and polish away the wrinkles of our hearts. What cosmetics are to the face wit is to the temper; and, after all, there is no wisdom like that which teaches us to forget."

"Come then," said Bolingbroke, rising, "we will lock up these papers, and take a melancholy drive, in order that we may enjoy mirth the better by-and-by."

CHAPTER V.

A Meeting of Wits—Conversation gone out to Supper in her Dress of Velvet and Jewels.

BOULAINVILLIERS! Comte de St. Saire! What will our great grandchildren think of that name? Fame is indeed a riddle! At the time I refer to, wit—learning—grace—all things that charm and enlighten—were supposed to centre in one word—*Boulainvilliers!* The good count had many rivals, it is true, but he had that exquisite tact peculiar to his countrymen, of making the very reputations of those rivals contribute to his own. And while he assembled them around him, the lustre of their *bons mots*, though it emanated from themselves, was reflected upon him.

It was a pleasant, though not a costly, apartment, in which we found our host. The room was sufficiently full of people to allow scope and variety to one group of talkers, without being full enough to permit those little knots and coteries which are the destruction of literary society. An old man of about seventy, of a sharp, shrewd, yet polished and courtly expression of countenance, of a great gaiety of manner, which was now and then rather displeasingly contrasted by an abrupt affectation of dignity, that, however, rarely lasted above a minute, and never withstood the shock of a *bon mot*, was the first person who accosted us. This old man was the wreck of the once celebrated Anthony Count Hamilton!

"Well, my lord," said he to Bolingbroke, "How do you like the weather at Paris?—it is a little better than the merciless air of London—is it not? 'Slife!—even in June one could not go open-breasted in those regions of cold and catarrh—a very great misfortune, let me tell you, my lord, if one's cambric happened to be of a very delicate and brilliant texture, and one wished to penetrate the inward folds of a lady's heart, by developing, to the best advantage, the exterior folds that covered his own."

"It is the first time," answered Bolingbroke, "that I ever heard so accomplished a courtier as Count Hamilton repine, with sincerity, that he could not bare his bosom to inspection."

"Ah!" cried Boulainvilliers, "but vanity makes a man show much that discretion would conceal."

"*Au diable* with your discretion!" said Hamilton, "'tis a vulgar virtue. Vanity is a truly aristocratic quality, and every way fitted to a gentleman. Should I ever have been renowned for my exquisite lace and web-like cambric, if I had not been vain? Never, *mon cher!* I should have gone into a convent and worn sackcloth, and, from *Count Antoine*, I should have thickened into *Saint Anthony*."

"Nay," cried Lord Bolingbroke, "there is as much scope for vanity in sackcloth as there is in cambric; for vanity is like the Irish ogling master in the Spectator, and if it teaches the playhouse to ogle by candle-light, it also teaches the church to ogle by day! But, pardon me, Monsieur Chaulieu, how well you look! I see that the myrtle sheds its verdure, not only over your poetry, but the poet. And it is right that, to the modern Anacreon, who has bequeathed to Time a treasure it will never forego, Time itself should be gentle in return."

"Milord," answered Chaulieu, an old man who, though considerably past seventy, was animated, in appearance and manner, with a vivacity and life that would have done honor to a youth—"Milord, it was beautifully said by the Emperor Julian that Justice retained the Graces in her vestibule. I see, now, that he should have substituted the word *Wisdom* for that of justice."

"Come," cried Anthony Hamilton, "this will never do. Compliments are the dullest things imaginable. For Heaven's sake, let us leave panegyric to blockheads, and say something bitter to one another, or we shall die of *ennui*."

"Right," said Boulainvilliers:—"Let us pick out some poor devil to begin with. Absent or present?—Deside which."

"Oh, absent," cried Chaulieu; "'tis a thousand times more piquant to slander than to rally! Let us commence with his Majesty: Count Devereux, have you seen Madame Maintenon and her devout infant since your arrival?"

"No!—the priests must be petitioned before the miracle is made public."

"What!" cried Chaulieu, "would you insinuate that his Majesty's piety is really nothing less than a miracle?"

"Impossible!" said Boulainvilliers, gravely, —"piety is as natural to kings as flattery to their courtiers: are we not told that they are made in God's own image!"

"If that were true," said Count Hamilton, somewhat profanely—"if that were true, I should no longer deny the impossibility of Atheism!"

"Fie, Count Hamilton," said an old gentleman, in whom I recognized the great Huet, "fie —wit should beware how it uses wings—its province is earth, not heaven."

"Nobody can better tell what wit is *not* than the learned Abbé Huet!" answered Hamilton with a mock air of respect.

"Psha!" cried Chaulieu, "I thought when we once gave the rein to satire it would carry us *pêle-mêle* against one another. But, in order to sweeten that drop of lemon-juice for you, my dear Huet, let me turn to Milord Bolingbroke, and ask him whether England can produce a scholar equal to Peter Huet, who in twenty years wrote notes to sixty-two volumes of Classics,* for the sake of a prince who never read a line in one of them?"

"We have some scholars," answered Bolingbroke; "but we certainly have no Huet. It is strange enough, but learning seems to me like a circle; it grows weaker the more it spreads. We now see many people capable of reading commentaries, but very few indeed capable of writing them."

"True," answered Huet; and in his reply he introduced the celebrated illustration which is at this day mentioned among his most felicitous *bons mots*. "Scholarship, formerly the most difficult and unaided enterprise of Genius, has now been made, by the very toils of the first mariners, but an easy and common-place voyage of leisure. But who would compare the great men, whose very diffiulties not only proved their ardor, but brought them the patience and the courage which alone are the parents of a genuine triumph, to the indolent loiterers of the present day, who, having little difficulty to conquer, have nothing of glory to attain? For my part, there seems to me the same difference between a scholar of our days and one of the past as there is between Christopher Columbus and the master of a packet-boat from Calais to Dover!"

"But," cried Anthony Hamilton, taking a pinch of snuff with the air of a man about to utter a witty thing—"but what have we—we spirits of the world, not imps of the closet,"—and he glanced at Huet—"to do with scholarship? All the waters of Castaly, which we want to pour into our brain, are such as will flow the readiest to our tongue."

"In short, then," said I, "you would assert that all a friend cares for in one's head is the quantity of talk in it?"

"Precisely, my dear Count," said Hamilton seriously; "and to that maxim I will add another, applicable to the opposite sex. All that a mistress cares for in one's heart is the quantity of love in it."

"What! are generosity, courage, honor, to go for nothing with our mistress, then?" cried Chaulieu.

"No; for she will believe, if you are a passionate lover, that you have all those virues; and if not, she will never believe that you have one."

"Ah! it was a pretty court of love in which the friend and biographer of Count Grammont learned the art!" said Bolingbroke.

"We believed so at the time, my lord; but there are as many changes in the fashion of making love as there are in that of making dresses. Honor me, Count Devereux, by using my snuff-box, and then looking at the lid."

"It is the picture of Charles the Second, which adorns it—is it not?"

"No, Count Devereux, it is the diamonds which adorn it. His Majesty's face I thought very beautiful while he was living; but now, on my conscience, I consider it the ugliest phiz I ever beheld. But I directed your notice to the picture because we were talking of love; and Old Rowley believed that he could make it better than any one else. All his courtiers had the same opinion of themselves; and I dare say the *beaux garçons* of Queen Anne's reign would say that not one of King Charley's gang knew what love was. Oh! 'tis a strange circle of revolutions, that love! Like the earth, it always changes, and yet always has the same materials."

"*L'Amour—l'amour—toujours l'amour*, with

* The Delphin Classics.

Count Anthony Hamilton!" said Boulainvilliers. "He is always on that subject; and *sacre bleu!* when he was younger, I am told he was like Cacus, the son of Vulcan, and breathed nothing but flames."

"You flatter me," said Hamilton. "Solve me now a knotty riddle, my Lord Bolingbroke. Why does a young man think it the greatest compliment to be thought wise, while an old man thinks it the greatest compliment to be told he has been foolish?"

"Is love foolish, then?" said Lord Bolingbroke.

"Can you doubt it?" answered Hamilton; "it makes a man think more of another than himself! I know not a greater proof of folly!"

"Ah—*mon aimable ami*"—cried Chaulieu; "you are the wickedest witty person I know. I cannot help loving your language, while I hate your sentiments."

"My language is my own—my sentiments are those of all men," answered Hamilton; "but are we not, by the by, to have young *Arouet* here to-night? What a charming person he is!"

"Yes," said Boulainvilliers. "He said he should be late; and I expect Fontenelle, too, but *he* will not come before supper. I found Fontenelle this morning conversing with my cook on the best manner of dressing asparagus. I asked him, the other day, what writer, ancient or modern, had ever given him the most sensible pleasure? After a little pause, the excellent old man said—'Daphnus!—'Daphnus!' repeated I, 'who the devil is he?' 'Why,' answered Fontenelle, with tears of gratitude in his benevolent eyes, 'I had some hypochondriacal ideas that suppers were unwholesome; and Daphnus is an ancient physician, who asserts the contrary; and declares,—think, my friend, what a charming theory!—that the moon is a great assistant of the digestion!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the *Abbe de Chaulieu.* "How like Fontenelle! what an anomalous creature 'tis! He has the most kindness and the least feeling of any man I ever knew. Let Hamilton find a pithier description for him if he can!"

Whatever reply the friend of the *preux Grammont* might have made was prevented by the entrance of a young man of about twenty-one.

In person he was tall, slight, and very thin. There was a certain affectation of polite address in his manner and mien which did not quite become him; and though he was received by the old wits with great cordiality, and on a footing of perfect equality; yet, the inexpressible air which denotes birth was both pretended to and wanting. This, perhaps, was however owing to the ordinary inexperience of youth; which, if not awkwardly bashful, is generally awkward in its assurance. Whatever its cause, the impression vanished directly he entered into conversation. I do not think I ever encountered a man so brilliantly, yet so easily, witty. He had but little of the studied allusion—the antithetical point—the classic metaphor, which chiefly characterize the wits of my day. On the contrary, it was an exceeding and *naive* simplicity, which gave such unrivalled charm and piquancy to his conversation. And while I have not scrupled to stamp on my pages some faint imitation of the peculiar dialogue of other eminent characters, I must confess myself utterly unable to convey the smallest idea of his method of making words irresistible. Contenting my efforts, therefore, with describing his personal appearance—interesting, because that of the most striking literary character it has been my lot to meet—I shall omit his share in the remainder of the conversation I am rehearsing, and beg the reader to recall that passage in Tacitus, in which the great historian says, that in the funeral of Junia, "the images of Brutus and Cassius outshone all the rest, from the very circumstance of their being the sole ones excluded from the rite."

The countenance, then, of Marie François Arouet (since so celebrated under the name of Voltaire), was plain in feature, but singularly striking in effect; its vivacity was the very perfection of what Steele once happily called "physiognomical eloquence." His eyes were blue, fiery rather than bright, and so restless that they never dwelt in the same place for a moment;* his mouth was at once the worst

* The reader will remember that this is a description of Voltaire as a very young man. I do not know any where a more impressive, almost a more ghastly, contrast, than that which the pictures of Voltaire, grown old present to Largilliere's picture of him at the age of twenty-four; and he was somewhat younger than twenty-four at the time of which the Count now speaks.—Ed.

and the most peculiar feature of his face: it betokened humor, it is true; but it also betrayed malignancy—nor did it ever smile without sarcasm. Though flattering to those present, his words against the absent, uttered by that bitter and curling lip, mingled with your pleasure at their wit a little fear at their causticity. I believe no one, be he as bold, as callous, or as faultless as human nature can be, could be one hour with that man and not feel apprehension. Ridicule, so lavish, yet so true to the mark—so wanton, yet so seemingly just—so bright, that while it wandered round its target, in apparent, though terrible playfulness, it burned into the spot, and engraved there a brand, and a token indelible and perpetual;—this no man could witness, when darted towards another, and feel safe for himself. The very caprice and levity of the jester seemed more perilous, because less to be calculated upon, than a systematic principle of bitterness or satire. Bolingbroke compared him, not unaptly, to a child who has possessed himself of Jupiter's bolts, and who makes use of those bolts in sport, which a God would only have used in wrath.

Arouet's forehead was not remarkable for height, but it was nobly and grandly formed, and, contradicting that of the mouth, wore a benevolent expression. Though so young, there was already a wrinkle on the surface of the front, and a prominence on the eyebrow, which showed that the wit and the fancy of his conversation were, if not regulated, at least contrasted, by more thoughtful and lofty characteristics of mind. At the time I write, this man has obtained a high throne among the powers of the lettered world. What he may yet be, it is in vain to guess: he may be all that is great and good, or—the reverse; but I cannot but believe that his career has only begun. Such men are born monarchs of the mind; they may be benefactors or tyrants: in either case, they are greater than the kings of the physical empire, because they defy armies and laugh at the intrigues of state. From themselves only come the balance of their power, the laws of their government, and the boundaries of their realm.

We sat down to supper. "Count Hamilton," said Bonlainvilliers, "are we not a merry set for such old fellows? Why, excepting Arouet, Milord Bolingbroke, and Count Devereux, there is scarcely one of us under seventy. Where, but at Paris, would you see *bons vivans* of our age? *Vivent la joie—la bagatelle!—l'amour!*"

"*Et le vin de Champagne,*" cried Chaulieu, filling his glass; "but what is there strange in our merriment? Philemon, the comic poet, laughed at ninety-seven. May we all do the same!"

"You forget," cried Bolingbroke, "that Philemon died of the laughing."

"Yes," said Hamilton; "but, if I remember right, it was at seeing an ass eat figs. Let us vow, therefore, never to keep company with asses!"

"Bravo, Count," said Boulainvilliers, "you have put the true moral on the story. Let us swear, by the ghost of Philemon, that we will never laugh at an ass's jokes—practical or verbal."

"Then we must always be serious, except when we are with each other," cried Chaulieu. "Oh, I would sooner take my chance of dying prematurely at ninety-seven than consent to such a vow!"

"Fontenelle," cried our host, "you are melancholy. What is the matter?"

"I mourn for the weakness of human nature," answered Fontenelle, with an air of patriarchal philanthropy. "I told your cook three times about the asparagus; and now—taste it. I told him not to put too much sugar, and he has put none. Thus it is with mankind—ever in extremes, and consequently ever in error! Thus it was that Luther said, so felicitously and so truly, that the human mind was like a drunken peasant on horseback—prop it on one side, and it falls on the other."

"Ha! ha! ha!" cried Chaulieu. "Who would have thought one could have found so much morality in a plate of asparagus! Taste this *salsifis.*"

"Pray, Hamilton," said Huet, "what *jeu de mot* was that you made yesterday at Madame D'Epernonville's, which gained you such applause?"

"Ah, repeat it, Count," cried Boulainvilliers; "'twas the most classical thing I have heard for a long time."

"Why," said Hamilton, laying down his knife and fork, and preparing himself by a large draught of the champagne—"why, Ma-

dame D'Epernonville appeared without her *tour;* you know, Lord Bolingbroke, that *tour* is the polite name for false hair. '*Ah, sacre!*' cried her brother, courteously, '*ma sœur, que vous êtes laide aujourd'hui—vous n'avez pas votre tour!*' '*Voilà, pourquoi elle n'est pas sibelle* (*Cybele*),' answered I."

"Excellent! famous!" cried we all, except Huet, who seemed to regard the punster with a very disrespectful eye. Hamilton saw it. "You do not think, Monsieur Huet, that there is wit in these *jeux de mots*—perhaps you do not admire wit at all?"

"Yes, I admire wit as I do the wind. When it shakes the trees, it is fine; when it cools the wave, it is refreshing; when it steals over flowers, it is enchanting; but when, Monsieur Hamilton, it whistles through the key-hole, it is unpleasant."

"The very worst illustration I ever heard," said Hamilton, coolly. "Keep to your classics, my dear Abbé. When Jupiter edited the work of Peter Huet, he did with wit as Peter Huet did with Lucan, when he edited the classics—he was afraid it might do mischief, and so left it out altogether."

"Let us drink!" cried Chaulieu; "let us drink!" and the conversation was turned again.

"What is that you say of Tacitus, Huet?" said Boulainvilliers.

"That his wisdom arose from his malignancy," answered Huet. "He is a perfect penetrator* into human vices; but knows nothing of human virtues. Do you think that a good man would dwell so constantly on what is evil? Believe me—no! A man cannot write much and well upon virtue without being virtuous, nor enter minutely and profoundly into the causes of vice without being vicious himself."

"It is true," said Hamilton: "and your remark, which affects to be so deep, is but a natural corollary from the hackneyed maxim that from experience comes wisdom."

"But, for my part," said Boulainvilliers, "I think Tacitus is not so invariably the analyzer of vice as you would make him. Look at the Agricola and the Germania."

"Ah! the Germany, above all things!" cried Hamilton, dropping a delicious morsel of *sanglier* in its way from hand to mouth, in his hurry to speak. "Of course, the historian, Boulainvilliers, advocates the Germany, from its mention of the origin of the feudal system—that incomparable bundle of excellences, which Le Comte de Boulainvilliers has declared to be *le chef d'œuvre de l'esprit humain;* and which the same gentleman regrets, in the most pathetic terms, no longer exists in order that the seigneur may feed upon *des gros morceaux de bœuf demi-cru*, may hang up half his peasants *pour encourager les autres*, and ravish the daughters of the defunct *pour leur donner quelque consolation.*"

"Seriously though," said the old Abbé de Chaulieu, with a twinkling eye, "*the last* mentioned evil, my dear Hamilton, was not without a little alloy of good."

"Yes," said Hamilton, "if it was only the daughters; but perhaps the seigneur was not too scrupulous with regard to the wives."

"Ah! shocking, shocking!" cried Chaulieu, solemnly. "Adultery is, indeed, an atrocious crime. I am sure I would most consciously cry out with the honest preacher—'Adultery, my children, is the blackest of sins. I do declare that I would rather have *ten* virgins in love with me than *one* married woman!'"

We all laughed at this enthusiastic burst of virtue from the chaste Chaulieu. And *Arouet* turned our conversation towards the ecclesiastical dissensions between Jesuits and Jansenists, that then agitated the kingdom. "Those priests," said Bolingbroke, "remind me of the nurses of Jupiter—they make a great clamor, in order to drown the voice of their God."

"Bravissimo!" cried Hamilton. "Is it not a pity, messieurs, that my Lord Bolingbroke was not a Frenchman? He is almost clever enough to be one."

"If he would drink a little more, he would be," cried Chaulieu, who was now setting us all a glorious example.

"What say you, Morton?" exclaimed Bolingbroke; "must we not drink these gentlemen under the table for the honor of our country."

"A challenge! a challenge!" cried Chaulieu. "I march first to the field?"

"Conquest or death!" shouted Bolingbroke. And the rites of Minerva were forsaken for those of Bacchus.

* A remark similar to this the reader will probably remember in the Huetiana, and will, I hope, agree with me in thinking it showy and untrue.—Ed.

CHAPTER VI.

A Court, Courtiers, and a King.

I THINK it was the second day after this "feast of reason" that Lord Bolingbroke deemed it advisable to retire to Lyons till his plans of conduct were ripened into decision. We took an affectionate leave of each other; but before we parted, and after he had discussed his own projects of ambition, we talked a little upon mine. Although I was a Catholic and a pupil of Montreuil, although I had fled from England, and had nothing to expect from the House of Hanover, I was by no means favorably disposed towards the Chevalier and his cause. I wonder if this avowal will seem odd to Englishmen of the next century.—To Englishmen of the present one, a Roman Catholic, and a lover of priestcraft and tyranny, are two words for the same thing; as if we could not murmur at tithes and taxes—insecurity of property—or arbitrary legislation, just as sourly as any other Christian community. No! I never loved the cause of the Stuarts—unfortunate, and therefore interesting, as the Stuarts were; by a very stupid, and yet uneffaceable confusion of ideas, I confounded it with the cause of Montreuil, and I hated the latter enough to dislike the former: I fancy all party principles are formed much in the same manner. I frankly told Bolingbroke my disinclination to the Chevalier.

"Between ourselves be it spoken," said he, "there is but little to induce a wise man, in *your* circumstances, to join James the Third. I would advise you rather to take advantage of your father's reputation at the French court, and enter into the same service he did. Things wear a dark face in England for you, and a bright one everywhere else."

"I have already," said I, "in my own mind, perceived and weighed the advantages of entering into the service of Louis. But he is old—he cannot live long. People now pay court to parties—not to the king. Which party, think you, is the best—that of Madame de Maintenon?"

"Nay, I think not; she is a cold friend, and never asks favors of Louis for any of her family. A bold game might be played by attaching yourself to the Duchesse d'Orleans (the Duke's mother). She is at daggers-drawn with Maintenon, it is true, and she is a violent, haughty, and coarse woman; but she has wit, talent, strength of mind, and will zealously serve any person of high birth, who pays her respect. But she can do nothing for you till the king's death, and then only on the chance of her son's power. But—let me see—you say Fleuri, the bishop of Fréjus, is to introduce you to Madame de Maintenon?"

"Yes; and has appointed the day after tomorrow for that purpose."

"Well, then, make close friends with him—you will not find it difficult; he has a delightful address, and if you get hold of his weak points, you may win his confidence. Mark me—Fleuri has no *faux-brillant*, no genius, indeed, of very prominent order; but he is one of those soft and smooth minds which, in a crisis like the present, when parties are contending and princes wrangling, always slip silently and unobtrusively into one of the best places. Keep in with Fréjus—you cannot do wrong by it—although you must remember that at present he is in ill odor with the king, and you need not go with *him twice* to Versailles. But, above all, when you are introduced to Louis, do not forget that you cannot please him better than by appearing awe-stricken."

Such was Bolingbroke's parting advice. The Bishop of *Frejus* carried me with him (on the morning we had appointed) to Versailles. What a magnificent work of royal imagination is that palace! I know not in any epic a grander idea than terming the avenues which lead to it the roads "*to Spain, to Holland*," etc. In London, they would have been the roads to Chelsea and Pentonville!

As we were driving slowly along in the bishop's carriage, I had ample time for conversation with that personage, who has since, as the Cardinal de Fleuri, risen to so high a pitch of power. He certainly has in him very little of the great man; nor do I know any where so striking an instance of this truth—that in that game of honors which is played at courts, we obtain success less by our talents than our tempers. He laughed, with a graceful turn of badinage, at the political peculiarities of Madame de Belzac: and said that it was not for the uppermost party to feel resentment at the chafings of the under one. Sliding from this topic, he then questioned me as to the gaieties I had witnessed. I gave him a descrip-

tion of the party at Boulainvilliers'. He seemed much interested in this, and showed more shrewdness than I should have given him credit for, in discussing the various characters of the *literati* of the day. After some general conversation on works of fiction, he artfully glided into treating on those of statistics and politics, and I then caught a sudden, but thorough, insight into the depths of his policy. I saw that, while he affected to be indifferent to the difficulties and puzzles of state, he lost no opportunity of gaining every particle of information respecting them; and that he made conversation, in which he was skilled, a vehicle for acquiring that knowledge which he had not the force of mind to create from his own intellect, or to work out from the *written* labors of others. If this made him a superficial statesman, it made him a prompt one; and there was never so lucky a minister with so little trouble to himself.*

As we approached the end of our destination, we talked of the King. On this subject he was jealously cautious. But I gleaned from him, despite of his sagacity, that it was high time to make all use of one's acquaintance with Madame de Maintenon that one could be enabled to do; and that it was so difficult to guess the exact places in which power would rest after the death of the old king, that supineness and silence made at present the most profound policy.

As we alighted from the carriage, and I first set my foot within the palace, I could not but feel involuntarily, yet powerfully impressed, with the sense of the spirit of the place. I was in the precincts of that mighty court which had gathered into one dazzling focus all the rays of genius which half a century had emitted; the court at which time had passed at once from the morn of civilization into its full noon and glory; the court of Condé and Turenne—of Villars and of Tourville; the court where, over the wit of Grammont, the profusion of Fouquet, the fatal genius of Louvois (fatal to humanity and to France), Love, real Love, had not disdained to shed its pathos and its truth, and to consecrate the hollow pageantries of royal pomp, with the tenderness, the beauty, and the repentance of La Vallière. Still over that scene hung the spells of a genius which, if artificial and cold, was also vast, stately, and magnificent—a genius which had swelled in the rich music of Racine—which had raised the nobler spirit and the freer thought of Pierre Corneille,* which had given edge to the polished weapon of Boileau—which had lavished over the bright page of Molière—Molière, more wonderful than all—a knowledge of the humors and the hearts of men, which no dramatist, save Shakspeare, has surpassed. Within those walls still glowed, though now waxing faint and dim, the fame of that monarch who had enjoyed, at least, till his later day, the fortune of Augustus, unsullied by the crimes of Octavius. Nine times, since the sun of that monarch rose, had the Papal Chair received a new occupant! Six sovereigns had reigned over the Ottoman hordes! The fourth emperor, since the birth of the same era, bore sway over Germany! Five czars, from Michael Romanoff to the Great Peter, had held, over their enormous territory, the precarious tenure of their iron power! Six kings had borne the painful cincture of the English crown;† two of those kings had been fugitives to that court—to the son of the last it was an asylum at that moment.

What wonderful changes had passed over the face of Europe during that single reign! In England only, what a vast leap in the waste of events, from the reign of the first Charles to that of George the First! I still lingered—I still gazed, as these thoughts, linked to one another in an electric chain, flashed over me! I still paused on the threshold of those stately halls which Nature herself had been conquered to rear! Where, through the whole earth, could I find so meet a symbol for the character and the name which that sovereign would leave to posterity, as this palace itself afforded? A gorgeous monument of regal state raised from a desert—crowded alike with empty pageantries and illustrious names—a prodigy of elaborate artifice, grand in its whole effect, petty

* At his death appeared the following punning epigram:

"*Floruit* sine fructu;
"*Defloruit* sine luctu."

He flowered without fruit, and faded without regret. —Ed.

* Rigidly speaking, Corneille belongs to a period earlier than that of Louis XIV., though he has been included in the æra formed by that reign.—Ed.

† Besides Cromwell; viz., Charles I., Charles II., James II., William and Mary, Anne, George I.

in its small details; a solitary oblation to a splendid selfishness, and most remarkable for the revenues which it exhausted, and the poverty by which it is surrounded!

Fleuri, with his usual urbanity—an urbanity that, on a great scale, would have been benevolence—had hitherto indulged me in my emotions; he now laid his hand upon my arm, and recalled me to myself. Before I could apologize for my abstraction, the bishop was accosted by an old man of evident rank, but of a countenance more strikingly demonstrative of the little cares of a mere courtier than any I ever beheld. "What news, Monsieur le Marquis?" said Fleuri, smiling.

"Oh! the greatest imaginable! the king talks of receiving the Danish minister on *Thursday*, which, you know, is his day of *domestic* business! What *can* this portend? Besides," and here the speaker's voice lowered into a whisper, "I am told by the Duc de la Rochefoucault that the king intends, out of all ordinary rule and practice, to take physic to-morrow—I can't believe it—no, I positively can't; but don't let this go farther!"

"Heaven forbid!" answered Fleuri, bowing, and the courtier passed on to whispher his intelligence to others. "Who's that gentleman?" I asked.

"The Marquis de Dangeau," answered Fleuri; "a nobleman of great quality, who keeps a diary of all the king says and does. It will perhaps be a posthumous publication, and will show the world of what importance nothings can be made. I dare say, Count, you have already, in England, seen enough of a court to know that there are some people who are as human echoes, and have no existence except in the noise occasioned by another."

I took care that my answer should not be a witticism, lest Fleuri should think I was attempting to rival him; and so we passed on in an excellent humor wlth each other.

We mounted the grand staircase, and came to an ante-chamber, which, though costly and rich, was not remarkably conspicuous for splendor. Here the bishop requested me to wait for a moment. Accordingly, I amused myself with looking over some engravings of different saints. Meanwhile, my companion passed through another door, and I was alone.

After an absence of nearly ten minutes, he returned. "Madame de Maintenon," said he, in a whisper, "is but poorly to-day. However, she has eagerly consented to see you—follow me!"

So saying, the ecclesiastical courtier passed on, with myself at his heels. We came to the door of a second chamber, at which Fleuri *scraped* gently. We were admitted, and found therein three ladies, one of whom was reading, a second laughing, and a third yawning, and entered into another chamber, where, alone, and seated by the window, in a large chair, with one foot on a stool, in an attitude that rather reminded me of my mother, and which seems to me a favorite position with all devotees, we found an old woman without rouge, plainly dressed, with spectacles on her nose, and a large book on a little table before her. With a most profound salutation, Fréjus approached, and taking me by the hand, said,—

"Will Madame suffer me to present to her the Count Devereux?"

Madame de Maintenon, with an air of great meekness and humility, bowed a return to the salutation. "The son of Madame la Maréchale de Devereux will always be most welcome to me!" Then, turning towards us, she pointed to two stools, and, while we were seating ourselves, said—

"And how did you leave my excellent friend?"

"When, Madame, I last saw my mother, which is now nearly a year ago, she was in health, and consoling herself for the advance of years by that tendency to wean the thoughts from this world which (in her own language) is the divinest comfort of old age!"

"Admirable woman!" said Madame de Maintenon, casting down her eyes; "such are, indeed, the sentiments in which I recognize the Marechale. And how does her beauty wear? Those golden locks, and blue eyes, and that snowy skin, are not yet, I suppose, wholly changed for an adequate compensation of the beauties within!"

"Time, Madame, has been gentle with her; and I have often thought, though never, perhaps, more strongly than at this moment, that there is in those divine studies, which bring calm and light to the mind, something which preserves and embalms, as it were, the beauty of the body."

A faint blush passed over the face of the devotee. No, no—not even at eighty years of

age is a compliment to a woman's beauty misplaced! There was a slight pause. I thought that respect forbade me to break it.

"His Majesty," said the bishop, in the tone of one who is sensible than he encroaches a little, and does it with consequent reverence—"his Majesty, I hope, is well."

"God be thanked, yes, as well as we can expect. It is now nearly the hour in which his Majesty awaits your personal inquiries."

Fleuri bowed as he answered—

"The king, then, will receive us to-day? My young companion is very desirous to see the greatest monarch, and, consequently, the greatest man, of the age."

"The desire is natural," said Madame de Maintenon: and then, turning to me, she asked if I had yet seen King James the Third!

I took care, in my answer, to express that even if I had resolved to make that stay in Paris which allowed me to pay my respects to him at all, I should have deemed that both duty and inclination led me, in the first instance, to offer my homage to one who was both the benefactor of my father, and the monarch whose realms afforded me protection

"You have not, then," said Madame de Maintenon, "decided on the length of your stay in France?"

"No," said I—and my answer was regulated by my desire to see how far I might rely on the services of one who expressed herself so warm a friend of that excellent woman, Madame la Maréchale—"No, Madame. France is the country of my birth, if England is that of my parentage; and could I hope for some portion of that royal favor which my father enjoyed, I would rather claim it as the home of my hopes than the refuge of my exile. But"—and I stopped short purposely.

The old lady looked at me very earnestly through her spectacles for one moment, and then, hemming twice with a little embarrassment, again remarked to the bishop, that the time for seeing the king was nearly arrived. Fleuri, whose policy at that period was very like that of the concealed queen, and who was, besides, far from desirous of introducing any new claimants on Madame de Maintenon's official favor, though he might not object to introduce them to her private friend, was not slow in taking the hint. He rose, and I was forced to follow his example.

Madame de Maintenon thought she might safely indulge in a little cordiality when I was just on the point of leaving her, and accordingly blest me, and gave me her hand, which I kissed very devoutly. An extremely pretty hand it was, too, notwithstanding the good queen's age. We then retired, and, repassing the three ladies, who were now all yawning, repaired to the king's apartments.

"What think you of Madame?" asked Fleuri.

"What can I think of her," said I, cautiously, "but that greatness seems in her to take its noblest form—that of simplicity?"

"True," rejoined Fleuri, "never was there so meek a mind joined to so lowly a carriage! Do you remark any trace of former beauty?"

"Yes, indeed, there is much that is soft in her countenance, and much that is still regular in her features; but what struck me most was the pensive and even sad tranquillity that rests upon her face when she is silent."

"The expression betrays the mind," answered Fleuri; "and the curse of the great is *ennui*."

"Of the great in station," said I, "but not necessarily of the great in mind. I have heard that the Bishop of Fréjus, nothwithstanding his rank and celebrity, employs every hour to the advantage of others, and consequently without tedium to himself."

"Aha!" said Fleuri, smiling gently, and patting my cheek: "see, now, if the air of palaces is not absolutely prolific of pretty speeches." And, before I could answer, we were in the apartments of the king.

Leaving me awhile to cool my heels in a gallery, filled with the butterflies who bask in the royal sunshine, Fréjus then disappeared among the crowd; he was scarcely gone when I was agreeably surprised by seeing Count Hamilton approach towards me.

"*Mort diable!*" said he, shaking me by the hand, *à l' Anglaise;* "I am really delighted to see any one here who does not insult my sins with his superior excellence. Eh, now, look round this apartment for a moment! Whether would you believe yourself at the court of a great king, or the levee of a Roman cardinal? Whom see you chiefly? Gallant soldiers, with worn brows and glittering weeds; wise statesmen, with ruin to Austria and defiance to Rome in every wrinkle; gay nobles in costly robes, and with

the bearing that so nicely teaches mirth to be dignified and dignity to be merry? No! cassock and hat, rosary and gown, decking sly, demure, hypocritical faces, flit, and stalk, and sadden round us. It seems to me," continued the witty Count, in a lower whisper, "as if the old king, having fairly buried his glory at Ramilies and Blenheim, had summoned all these good gentry to sing psalms over it! But are you waiting for a private audience?"

"Yes, under the auspices of the Bishop of Fréjus."

"You might have chosen a better guide—the king has been too much teased about him," rejoined Hamilton, "and now, that we are talking of him, I will show you a singular instance of what good manners can do at court, in preference to good abilities. You observe yon quiet, modest-looking man, with a sensible countenance, and a clerical garb; you observe how he edges away when any one approaches to accost him; and how, from his extreme disesteem of himself, he seems to inspire every one with the same sentiment. Well, that man is a namesake of Fleuri's, the Prior of *Argenteuil;* he has come here, I suppose, for some particular and temporary purpose, since, in reality, he has left the court. Well, that worthy priest—do remark his bow; did you ever see anything so awkward?—is one of the most learned divines that the church can boast of; he is as immeasurably superior to the smooth-faced Bishop of Fréjus as Louis the Fourteenth is to my old friend Charles the Second. He has had equal opportunities with the said bishop; been preceptor to the princes of Conti, and the Count de Vermandois; and yet, I will wager that he lives and dies a tutor—a book-worm—and a prior; while t'other Fleuri, without a particle of merit, but of the most superficial order, governs already kings through their mistresses, kingdoms through the kings, and may, for aught I know, expand into a prime minister, and ripen into a cardinal."

"Nay," said I, smiling, "there is little chance of so exalted a lot for the worthy bishop."

"Pardon me," interrupted Hamilton, "I am an old courtier, and look steadily on the game I no longer play. Suppleness, united with art, may do any thing in a court like this; and the smooth and unelevated craft of a Fleuri may win even to the same height as the deep wiles of the glittering Mazarin, or the superb genius of the imperious Richelieu."

"Hist!" said I, "the bishop has re-appeared. Who is that old priest, with a fine countenance, and an address that will, at least, please you better than that of the Prior of *Argenteuil*, who has just stopped our episcopal courtier?"

"What! do you not know? It is the most celebrated preacher of the day—the great Massillon. It is said that that handsome person goes a great way towards winning converts among the court ladies; it is certain, at least, that when Massillon first entered the profession, he was to the soul something like the spear of Achilles to the body; and though very efficacious in healing the wounds of conscience, was equally ready, in the first instance, to inflict them."

"Ah," said I, "see the malice of wit; and see, above all, how much more ready one is to mention a man's frailties than to enlarge upon his virtues."

"To be sure," answered Hamilton, coolly, and patting his snuff-box—"to be sure, we old people like history better than fiction; and frailty is certain, while virtue is always doubtful."

"Don't judge of all people," said I, "by your experience among the courtiers of Charles the Second."

"Right," said Hamilton. "Providence never assembled so many rascals together before, without hanging them. And he would indeed be a bad judge of human nature who estimated the characters of men in general by the heroes of Newgate and the victims of Tyburn. But your bishop approaches. Adieu!"

"What!" said Fleuri, joining me and saluting Hamilton, who had just turned to depart, "what, Count Antoine! Does anything but whim bring you here to-day?"

"No," answered Hamilton; "I am only here for the same purpose as the poor go to the temples of Caitan—to *inhale the steam of those good things which I see the priests devour.*"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the good-natured bishop, not in the least disconcerted; and Count Hamilton, congratulating himself on his *bon mot*, turned away.

"I have spoken to his Most Christian Majesty," said the bishop: "he is willing, as he before ordained, to admit you to his presence. The Duc de Maine is with the king, as also

some other members of the royal family; but you will consider this a private audience."

I expressed my gratitude—we moved on—the doors of an apartment were thrown open—and I saw myself in the presence of Louis XIV.

The room was partially darkened. In the centre of it, on a large sofa, reclined the king; he was dressed (though this, if I may so speak, I rather remembered than noted) in a coat of black velvet, slightly embroidered; his vest was of white satin; he wore no jewels nor orders, for it was only on grand or gala days that he displayed personal pomp. At some little distance from him stood three members of the royal family—them I never regarded—all my attention was bent upon the king. My temperament is not that on which greatness, or indeed any external circumstances, make much impression, but as following, at a little distance, the Bishop of Fréjus, I approached the royal person, I must confess that Bolingbroke had scarcely need to have cautioned me not to appear too self-possessed. Perhaps, had I seen that great monarch in his *beaux jours*—in the plenitude of his power—his glory—the dazzling and meridian splendor of his person — his court — and his renown, pride might have made me more on my guard against too deep, or at least, too apparent, an impression; but the many reverses of that magnificent sovereign—reverses in which he had shown himself more great than in all his previous triumphs and earlier successes; his age—his infirmities—the very clouds round the setting sun—the very howls of joy at the expiring lion—all were calculated, in my mind, to deepen respect into reverence, and tincture reverence itself with awe. I saw before me not only the majesty of Louis-le-Grand, but that of misfortune, of weakness, of infirmity, and of age; and I forgot at once, in that reflection, what otherwise would have blunted my sentiments of deference, viz., the crimes of his ministers, and the exactions of his reign! Endeavoring to collect my mind from an embarrassment which surprised myself, I lifted my eyes towards the king, and saw a countenance where the trace of the superb beauty, for which his manhood had been celebrated, still lingered, broken, not destroyed, and borrowing a dignity even more imposing from the marks of encroaching years, and from the evident exhaustion of suffering and disease.

Fleuri said, in a low tone, something which my ear did not catch. There was a pause—only a moment's pause; and then, in a voice, the music of which I had hitherto deemed exaggerated, the king spoke; and in that voice there was something so kind and encouraging, that I felt reassured at once. Perhaps its tone was not the less conciliating from the evident effect which the royal presence had produced upon me.

"You have given us, Count Devereux," said the king, "a pleasure which we are glad, in person, to acknowledge to you. And it has seemed to us fitting that the country in which your brave father acquired his fame should also be the asylum of his son."

"Sire," answered I, "Sire, it shall not be my fault if that country is not henceforth my own; and, in inheriting my father's name, I inherit also his gratitude and his ambition."

"It is well said, sir," said the king; and I once more raised my eyes, and perceived that his were bent upon me. "It is well said," he repeated, after a short pause; "and in granting to you this audience, we were not unwilling to hope that you were desirous to attach yourself to our court. The times do not require" (here I thought the old king's voice was not quite so firm as before) "the manifestation of your zeal in the same career as that in which your father gained laurels to France and to himself. But we will not neglect to find employment for your abilities, if not for your sword."

"That sword which was given to me, Sire," said I, "by your Majesty, shall be ever drawn (against all nations but one) at your command; and, in being your Majesty's petitioner for future favors, I only seek some channel through which to evince my gratitude for the past."

"We do not doubt," said Louis, "that whatever be the number of the ungrateful we may make by testifying our good pleasure on your behalf, *you* will not be among the number." The king here made a slight, but courteous inclination, and turned round. The observant Bishop of Fréjus, who had retired to a little distance, and who knew that the king never liked talking more than he could help it, gave me a signal. I obeyed, and backed, with all due deference, out of the royal presence.

So closed my interview with Louis XIV. Although his Majesty did not indulge in pro-

lixity, I spoke of him for a long time afterwards as the most eloquent of men. Believe me, there is no orator like a king; one word from a royal mouth stirs the heart more than Demosthenes could have done. There was a deep moral in that custom of the ancients, by which the Goddess of Persuasion was always represented *with a diadem on her head.*

CHAPTER VII.

Reflections—A Soirée—The appearance of one important in the History—A Conversation with Madame de Balzac highly satisfactory and cheering—A Rencontre with a curious old Soldier—The extinction of a once great Luminary.

I HAD now been several weeks at Paris; I had neither eagerly sought, nor sedulously avoided, its gaieties. It is not that one violent sorrow leaves us without power of enjoyment—it only lessens the power, and deadens the enjoyment; it does not take away from us the objects of life—it only forestalls the more indifferent calmness of age. The blood no longer flows in an irregular, but delicious, course of vivid and wild emotion; the step no longer spurns the earth; nor does the ambition wander, insatiable, yet undefined, over the million paths of existence; but we lose not our old capacities—they are quieted, not extinct. The heart can never utterly and long be dormant; trifles may not charm it any more, nor levities delight; but its pulse has not yet ceased to beat. We survey the scene that moves around, with a gaze no longer distracted by every hope that flutters by; and it is therefore that we find ourselves more calculated than before for the graver occupations of our race. The overflowing temperament is checked to its proper level, the ambition bounded to its prudent and lawful goal. The earth is no longer so green, nor the heaven so blue, nor the fancy that stirs within us so rich in its creations; but we look more narrowly on the living crowd, and more rationally on the aims of men. The misfortune which has changed us, has only adapted us the better to a climate in which misfortune is a portion of the air. The grief, that has thralled our spirit to a more narrow and dark cell, has also been a chain that has linked us to mankind with a strength of which we dreamt not in the day of a wilder freedom and more luxuriant aspirings. In later life, a new spirit, partaking of that which was our earliest, returns to us. The solitude which delighted us in youth, but which, when the thoughts that make solitude a fairy land are darkened by affliction, becomes a fearful and sombre void, resumes its old spell, as the more morbid and urgent memory of that affliction crumbles away by time. Content is a hermit; but so also is apathy. Youth loves the solitary couch, which it surrounds with dreams. Age, or Experience (which is the mind's age) loves the same couch for the rest which it affords; but the wide interval between is that of exertion, of labor, and of labor among men. The woe which makes our *hearts* less social, often makes our *habits* more so. The thoughts which in calm would have shunned the world, are driven upon it by the tempest, even as the birds which forsake the habitable land can, so long as the wind sleeps, and the thunder rests within its cloud, become the constant and solitary brooders over the waste sea; but the moment the storm awakes, and the blast pursues them, they fly, by an overpowering instinct, to some wandering bark, some vestige of human and social life: and exchange, even for danger from the hands of men, the desert of an angry Heaven, and the solitude of a storm.

I heard no more, either of Madame de Maintenon or the king. Meanwhile, my flight and friendship with Lord Bolingbroke had given me a consequence in the eyes of the exiled prince, which I should not otherwise have enjoyed; and I was honored by very flattering overtures to enter actively into his service. I have before said that I felt no enthusiasm in his cause, and I was far from feeling it for his person. My ambition rather directed its hopes towards a career in the service of France. France was the country of my birth, and the country of my father's fame. There no withering remembrances awaited me—no private regrets were associated with its scenes—and no public penalties with its political institutions. And, although I had not yet received any token of Louis's remembrance, in the ordinary routine of court favors, expectation as yet would have been premature; besides, his royal fidelity to his word was proverbial; and, sooner or later, I indulged the hope to profit by the sort of promise he had insinuated to me. I

declined, therefore, with all due respect, the offers of the Chevalier, and continued to live the life of idleness and expectation, until Lord Bolingbroke returned to Paris, and accepted the office of secretary of state in the service of the Chevalier. As he has publicly declared his reasons, in this step, I do not mean to favor the world with his private conversations on the same subject.

A day or two after his return, I went with him to a party given by a member of the royal family. The first person by whom we were accosted—and I rejoiced at it, for we could not have been accosted by a more amusing one—was Count Anthony Hamilton.

"Ah! my Lord Bolingbroke," said he, sauntering up to us; "how are you?—delighted to see you again. Do look at Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans! Saw you ever such a creature? Whither are you moving, my lord? Ah! see him, Count, see him, gliding off to that pretty duchess, of course; well, he has a beautiful bow, it must be owned—why, you are not going too?—what would the world say if Count Anthony Hamilton were seen left to himself? No, no, come and sit down by Madame de Cornuel—she longs to be introduced to you, and is one of the wittiest women in Europe."

"With all my heart! provided she employs her wit ill-naturedly, and uses it in ridiculing other people, not praising herself."

"Oh! nobody can be more satirical; indeed, what difference is there between wit and satire? Come, Count!"

And Hamilton introduced me forthwith to Madame de Cornuel. She received me very politely; and, turning to two or three people who formed the circle round her, said, with the greatest composure, "Messieurs, oblige me by seeking some other object of attraction; I wish to have a private conference with my new friend."

"I may stay," said Hamilton.

"Ah! certainly; you are never in the way."

"In that respect, *Madame*," said Hamilton, taking snuff, and bowing very low, "in that respect I must strongly remind you of your excellent husband."

"Fie!" cried Madame de Cornuel; then, turning to me, she said, "Ah! Monsieur, if you *could* have come to Paris some years ago, you would have been enchanted with us—we were so changed. Imagine the fine old king, thinking it wicked, not to hear plays, but to hear *players* act them, and so making the royal family a company of comedians. *Mon Dieu!* how villainously they perform! but do you know why I wished to be introduced to you?"

"Yes! in order to have a new listener; old listeners must be almost as tedious as old news."

"Very shrewdly said, and not far from the truth. The fact is, that I wanted to talk about all these fine people present to some one for whose ear my anecdotes would have the charm of novelty. Let us begin with Louis Armand, Prince of Conti—you see him?"

"What, that short-sighted, stout, and rather handsome man, with a cast of countenance somewhat like the pictures of *Henri Quatre*, who is laughing so merrily?"

"*O Ciel!* how droll! No, that handsome man is no less a person than the *Duc d'Orleans*. You see a little ugly thing, like an anatomized ape—there, see—he has just thrown down a chair, and, in stooping to pick it up, has almost fallen over the Dutch ambassadress—that is Louis Armand, Prince of Conti. Do you know what the Duc d'Orleans said to him the other day? '*Mon bon ami*,' he said, pointing to the prince's limbs—(did you ever see such limbs out of a menagerie, by-the-by?)—'*Mon bon ami*, it is a fine thing for you that the Psalmist has assured us "that the Lord delighteth not in any man's legs."' Nay, don't laugh, it is quite true!"

It was now for Count Hamilton to take up the ball of satire; he was not a whit more merciful than the kind Madame de Cornuel. "The Prince," said he, "had so exquisite an awkwardness, that, whenever the king hears a noise, and inquiries the cause, the invariable answer is, that 'the Prince of Conti has just tumbled down!' But, tell me, what do you think of Madame d'Aumont? She is in the English head-dress, and looks *triste à la mort*."

"She is rather pretty, to my taste."

"Yes," cried Madame de Cornuel, interrupting the gentle Antoine—(it did one's heart good to see how strenuously each of them tried to talk more scandal than the other), "yes, she is thought very pretty; but I think her very like a *fricandeau*—white, soft, and insipid. She is always in tears," added the goodnatured Cornuel, "after her prayers, both at morning and evening. I asked why; and she answered,

pretty simpleton, that she was always forced to pray to be made good, and she feared Heaven would take her at her word! However, she has many worshippers, and they call her the evening star."

"They should rather call her the Hyades!" said Hamilton, "if it be true that she sheds tears every morning and night, and her rising and setting are thus always attended by rain."

"Bravo, Count Antoine! she shall be so called in future," said Madame de Cornuel. "But now, Monsieur Devereux, turn your eyes to that hideous old woman."

"What! the Duchesse d'Orléans?"

"The same. She is in full dress to-night; but in the day-time you generally see her in a riding-habit and a man's wig; she is—"

"Hist!" interrupted Hamilton; "do you not tremble to think what she would do if she overheard you? she is such a terrible creature at fighting! You have no conception, Count, what an arm she has. She knows her ugliness, and laughs at it, as all the rest of the world does. The king took her hand one day, and said, smiling, 'What could Nature have meant when she gave this hand to a German princess instead of a Dutch peasant?' 'Sire,' said the Duchesse, very gravely, 'Nature gave this hand to a German princess for the purpose of boxing the ears of her ladies in waiting!'"

"Ha! ha! ha!" said Madame de Cornuel, laughing; "one is never at a loss for jokes upon a woman who eats *salade au lard*, and declares that, whenever she is unhappy, her only consolation is ham and sausages! Her son treats her with the greatest respect, and consults her in all his amours, for which she professes the greatest horror, and which she retails to her correspondents all over the world, in letters as long as her pedigree. But you are looking *at* her son, is he not of a good mien?"

"Yes, pretty well; but does not exhibit to advantage by the side of Lord Bolingbroke, wlth whom he is now talking. Pray, who is the third personage that has just joined them?"

"Oh, the wretch! it is the Abbe Dubois; a living proof of the folly of the French proverb, which says that Mercuries should *not* be made *du bois*. Never was there a Mercury equal to the Abbe,—but, do look at that old man to the left—he is one of the most remarkable persons of the age."

"What! he with the small features, and comely countenance, considering his years?"

"The same," said Hamilton; "it is the notorious Choisi. You know that he is the modern Tiresias, and has been a woman as well as man."

"How do you mean?"

"Ah, you may well ask!" cried Madame de Cornuel. "Why, he lived for many years in the disguise of a woman, and had all sorts of curious adventures."

"*Mort Diable!*" cried Hamilton; "it was entering your ranks, Madame, as a spy. I hear he makes but a sorry report of what he saw there."

"Come, Count Antoine," cried the lively de Cornuel, "we must not turn our weapons against each other; and when you attack a woman's sex, you attack her individually. But what makes you look so intently, Count Devereux, at that ugly priest?"

The person thus flatteringly designated was Montreuil; he had just caught my eye, among a group of men who were conversing eagerly.

"Hush, Madame!" said I, "spare me for a moment;" and I rose, and mingled with the Abbe's companions. "So, you have only arrived to-day," I heard one of them say to him.

"No, I could not dispatch my business before."

"And how are matters in England?"

"Ripe!—if the life of his Majesty (of France) be spared a year longer, we will send the Elector of Hanover back to his principality."

"Hist!" said the companion, and looked towards me. Montreuil ceased abruptly—our eyes met—his fell. I affected to look among the group as if I had expected to find there some one I knew, and then, turning away, I seated myself alone and apart. There, unobserved, I kept my looks on Montreuil. I remarked that, from time to time, his keen dark eye glanced toward me, with a look rather expressive of vigilance than anything else. Soon afterwards his little knot dispersed; I saw him converse for a few moments with Dubois, who received him, I thought, distantly; and then he was engaged in a long conference with the Bishop of Frejus, whom, till then, I had not perceived among the crowd.

As I was loitering on the staircase, where I

saw Montreuil depart with the bishop, in the carriage of the latter, Hamilton, accosting me, insisted on my accompanying him to Chaulieu's, where a late supper awaited the sons of wine and wit. However, to the good Count's great astonishment, I preferred solitude and reflection, for that night, to anything else.

Montreuil's visit to the French capital boded me no good. He possessed great influence with Fleuri, and was in high esteem with Madame de Maintenon, and, in effect, very shortly after his return to Paris, the Bishop of Fréjus looked upon me with a most cool sort of benignancy; and Madame de Maintenon told her friend, the Duchesse de St. Simon, that it was a great pity a young nobleman of my birth and prepossessing appearance—(ay! my prepossessing appearance would never have occurred to the devotee, if I had not seemed so sensible of her own)—should not only be addicted to the wildest dissipation, but, worse still, to Jansenistical tenets. After this, there was no hope for me, save in the king's word, which his increasing infirmities naturally engrossing his attention, prevented my hoping too sanguinely, would dwell very acutely on his remembrance. I believe, however, so religiously scrupulous was Louis upon a point of honor, that, had he lived, I should have had nothing to complain of. As it was—but I anticipate!—Montreuil disappeared from Paris, almost as suddenly as he had appeared there. And, as drowning men catch at a straw, so, finding my affairs at a very low ebb, I thought I would take advice, even from Madame de Balzac.

I accordingly repaired to her hotel. She was at home, and, fortunately, alone.

"You are welcome, *mon fils*," said she: "suffer me to give you that title—you are welcome—it is some days since I saw you."

"I have numbered them I assure you, Madame," said I, "and they have crept with a dull pace; but you know that business has claims as well as pleasure!"

"True!" said Madame de Balzac, pompously; "I myself find the weight of politics a little insupportable, though so used to it; to your young brain I can readily imagine how irksome it must be!"

"Would, Madame, that I could obtain your experience by contagion; as it is I fear that I have profited little by my visit to his majesty. Madame de Maintenon will not see me, and the Bishop of Fréjus (excellent man!) has been seized with a sudden paralysis of memory, whenever I present myself in his way."

"That party will never do—I thought not," said Madame de Balzac, who was a wonderful imitator of the fly on the wheel; "*my* celebrity and the knowledge that *I* loved you for your father's sake, were, I fear, sufficient to destroy your interest with the Jesuits and their tools. Well, well, we must repair the mischief we have occasioned you. What place would suit you best?"

"Why, anything diplomatic. I would rather travel, at my age, than remain in luxury and indolence ever at Paris!"

"Ah, nothing like diplomacy!" said Madame de Balzac, with the air of a Richelieu, and emptying her snuff-box at a pinch; "but have you, my son, the requisite qualities for that science, as well as the tastes? Are you capable of intrigue? Can you say one thing and mean another? Are you aware of the immense consequence of a look or a bow? Can you live like a spider, in the centre of an inexplicable net—inexplicable as well as dangerous—to all but the weaver? That, my son, is the art of politics—that is to be a diplomatist!"

"Perhaps to one less penetrating than Madame de Balzac," answered I, "I might, upon trial, not appear utterly ignorant of the noble art of state duplicity which she has so eloquently depicted."

"Possibly!" said the good lady; "it must indeed be a profound dissimulator to deceive *me*."

"But what would you advise me to do in the present crisis? What party to adopt—what individual to flatter?"

Nothing, I already discovered, and have already observed, did the inestimable Madame de Balzac dislike more than a downright question—she never answered it.

"Why, really," said she, preparing herself for a long speech, "I am quite glad you consult me, and I will give you the best advice in my power. *Ecoutez donc*—you have seen the Duc de Maine?"

"Certainly!"

"Hum! ha! it would be wise to follow him; but—you take me—you understand.—Then, you know, my son, there is the Duc d'Orleans—fond of pleasure—full of talent—but you

know—there is a little—what do you call it—you understand. As for the Duc de Bourbon, 'tis quite a simpleton—nevertheless we must consider—nothing like consideration—believe me, no diplomatist ever hurries. As for Madame de Maintenon—you know, and I know too, that the Duchesse d'Orleans calls her an old hag—but then—a word to the wise—Eh?—what shall we say to Madame the Duchesse herself?—what a fat woman she is—but excessively clever—such a letter-writer!—Well—you see, my dear young friend, that it is a very difficult matter to decide upon—but you must already be fully aware what plan I should advise."

"Already, Madame!"

"To be sure! What have I been saying to you all this time?—did you not hear me?—Shall I repeat my advice?"

"Oh, no! I perfectly comprehend you now; you would advise me—in short—to—to—do—as well as I can."

"You have said it, my son. I thought you would understand me on a little reflection."

"To be sure—to be sure," said I.

And three ladies being announced, my conference with Madame de Balzac ended.

I now resolved to wait a little till the tides of power seemed somewhat more settled, and I could ascertain in what quarter to point my bark of enterprise. I gave myself rather more eagerly to society, in proportion as my political schemes were suffered to remain torpid. My mind could not remain quiet, without preying on itself; and no evil appeared to me so great as tranquillity. Thus the spring and earlier summer passed on, till, in August, the riots preceding the Rebellion broke out in Scotland. At this time I saw but little of Lord Bolingbroke in private; though, with his characteristic affectation, he took care that the load of business, with which he was really oppressed, should not prevent his enjoyment of all gaieties in public. And my indifference to the cause of the Chevalier, in which he was so warmly engaged, threw a natural restraint upon our conversation, and produced an involuntary coldness in our intercourse—so impossible is it for men to be private friends who differ on a public matter.

One evening I was engaged to meet a large party, at a country-house about forty miles from Paris. I went, and stayed some days. My horses had accompanied me; and, when I left the château, I resolved to make the journey to Paris on horseback. Accordingly, I ordered my carriage to follow me, and attended by a single groom, commenced my expedition. It was a beautiful still morning—the first day of the first month of autumn. I had proceeded about ten miles, when I fell in with an old French officer. I remember—though I never saw him but that once—I remember his face as if I had encountered it yesterday. It was thin and long, and yellow enough to have served as a caricature, rather than a portrait of Don Quixote. He had a hook nose, and a long sharp chin; and all the lines, wrinkles, curves and furrows, of which the human visage is capable, seemed to have met in his cheeks. Nevertheless, his eye was bright and keen—his look alert—and his whole bearing firm, gallant, and soldier-like. He was attired in a sort of military undress—wore a mustachio, which, though thin and gray, was carefully curled; and at the summit of a very respectable wig was perched a small cocked-hat, adorned with a black feather. He rode very upright in his saddle; and his horse, a steady, stalwart quadruped of the Norman breed, with a terribly long tail, and a prodigious breadth of chest, put one stately leg before another in a kind of trot, which, though it seemed, from its height of action, and the proud look of the steed, a pretension to motion more than ordinarily brisk, was, in fact, a little slower than a common walk.

This noble cavalier seemed sufficiently an object of curiosity to my horse to induce the animal to testify his surprise by shying, very jealously and very vehemently, in passing him. This ill-breeding on his part was indignantly returned on the part of the Norman charger, who, uttering a sort of squeak, and shaking his long mane and head, commenced a series of curvets and capers which cost the old Frenchman no little trouble to appease. In the midst of these equine freaks, the horse came so near me as to splash my nether garment, with a liberality as little ornamental as it was pleasurable.

The old Frenchman seeing this, took off his cocked hat very politely, and apologized for the accident. I replied with equal courtesy; and, as our horses slid into quiet, their riders slid into conversation. It was begun and

chiefly sustained by my new comrade; for I am little addicted to commence unnecessary socialities myself, though I should think very meanly of my pretensions to the name of a gentleman and a courtier, if I did not return them when offered, even by a beggar.

"It is a fine horse of yours, Monsieur," said the old Frenchman; "but I cannot believe—pardon me for saying so—that your slight English steeds are so well adapted to the purposes of war as our strong chargers—such as mine for example."

"It is very possible, Monsieur," said I. "Has the horse you now ride done service in the field as well as on the road?"

"Ah! *le pauvre petit mignon*—no!"—(*petit*, indeed—this little darling was seventeen hands high at the very least)—"no, Monsieur; it is but a young creature this—his grandfather served me well!"

"I need not ask you, Monsieur, if you have borne arms—the soldier is stamped upon you!"

"Sir, you flatter me highly!" said the old gentleman, blushing to the very tip of his long lean ears, and bowing as low as if I had called him a *Condé;* "I have followed the profession of arms for more than fifty years."

"Fifty years—'tis a long time!"

"A long time," rejoined my companion, "a long time to look back upon with regret."

"Regret! by Heaven—I should think the remembrance of fifty years' excitement and glory would be a remembrance of triumph."

The old man turned round on his saddle, and looked at me for some moments very wistfully—"You are young, sir," he said, "and at your years I should have thought with you—but—" (then abruptly changing his voice, he continued)—"Triumph, did you say? sir, I have had three sons; they are dead—they died in battle—I did not weep—I did not shed a tear, sir—not a tear! But I will tell you when I did weep. I came back, an old man, to the home I had left as a young one. I saw the country a desert. I saw that the noblesse had become tyrants—the peasants had become slaves—such slaves—savage from despair—even when they were most gay, most fearfully gay, from constitution. Sir, I saw the priest rack and grind, and the seigneur exact and pillage, and the tax gatherer squeeze out the little the other oppressors had left:—anger, discontent, wretchedness, famine, a terrible separation between one order of people and another—an incredible indifference to the miseries their despotism caused, on the part of the aristocracy—a sullen and vindictive hatred for the perpetration of those miseries on the part of the people—all places sold—even all honors priced, at the court, which was become a public market—a province of peasants—of living men bartered for a few livres, and literally passed from one hand to another—to be squeezed and drained anew by each new possessor—in a word, sir, an abandoned court, an unredeemed noblesse—unredeemed, sir, by a single benefit which, in other countries, even the most feudal, the vassal obtains from the master—a peasantry famished—a nation loaded with debt, which it sought to pay by tears;—these are what I saw—these are the consequences of that heartless and miserable vanity, from which arose wars neither useful nor honorable—these are the real components of that *triumph*, as you term it, which you wonder that I regret."

Now, although it was impossible to live at the court of Louis XIV. in his latter days, and not feel, from the general discontent that prevailed even *there*, what a dark truth the old soldier's speech contained—yet I was somewhat surprised by an enthusiasm so little military in a person whose bearing and air were so conspicuously martial.

"You draw a melancholy picture," said I; "and the wretched state of culture which the lands that we now pass through exhibit, is a witness how little exaggeration there is in your coloring. However, these are but the ordinary evils of war, and, if your country endures them, do not forget that she has also inflicted them. Remember what France did to Holland, and own that it is but a retribution that France should now find that the injury we do to others is (among nations as well as individuals) injury to ourselves."

My old Frenchman curled his moustaches with the finger and thumb of his left hand: this was rather too subtle a distinction for him.

"That may be true enough, Monsieur," said he; "but *morbleu*, those *maudits* Dutchmen deserved what they sustained at our hands. No, sir, no—I am not so base as to forget the glory my country acquired, though I weep for her wounds."

"I do not quite understand you, sir," said I;

"did you not just now confess that the wars you had witnessed were neither honorable nor useful? What glory, then, was to be acquired in a war of that character, even though it was so delightfully animated by cutting the throats of 'those *maudits* Dutchmen?'"

"Sir," answered the Frenchman, drawing himself up, "you did *not* understand me. When we punished Holland, we did rightly. *We conquered!*"

"Whether you conquered, or not (for the good folk of Holland are not so sure of the fact)," answered I, "that war was the most unjust in which your king was ever engaged; but pray, tell me, sir, what war it is that you lament?"

The Frenchman frowned—whistled—put out his under lip, in a sort of angry embarrassment—and then, spurring his great horse into a curvet, said,

"That last war with the English!"

"Faith," said I, "that was the justest of all."

"Just!" cried the Frenchman, halting abruptly, and darting at me a glance of fire, "just! no more, sir! no more! I was at Blenheim, and at Ramillies!"

As the old warrior said the last words, his voice faltered; and though I could not help inly smiling at the confusion of ideas, by which wars were just or unjust, according as they were fortunate or not, yet I respected his feelings enough to turn away my face, and remain silent.

"Yes," renewed my comrade, coloring with evident shame, and drawing his cocked hat over his brows, "yes, I received my last wound at Ramillies. *Then* my eyes were opened to the horrors of war; *then* I saw and cursed the evils of ambition; *then* I resolved to retire from the armies of a king who had lost for ever his name, his glory, and his country."

Was there ever a better type of the French nation than this old soldier? As long as fortune smiles on them, it is "*Marchons au diable!*" and "*Vive la gloire!*" Directly they get beat, it is, "*Ma pauvre patrie!*" and "*Les calamites affreuses de la guerre!*"

„ However," said I, "the old king is drawing near the end of his days, and is said to express his repentance at the evils his ambition has occasioned."

The old soldier shoved back his hat, and offered me his snuff-box. I judged by this that he was a little mollified.

"Ah!" he renewed, after a pause, "Ah! times are sadly changed, since the year 1667; when the young king—he was young then—took the field, in Flanders, under the great Turenne. *Sacristie!* What a hero he looked upon his white war-horse! I would have gone—ay, and the meanest and backwardest soldier in the camp would have gone—into the very mouth of the cannon, for a look from that magnificent countenance, or a word from that mouth which knew so well what words were! Sir, there was in the war of 72, when we were at peace with Great Britain, an English gentleman, then in the army, afterwards a marshal of France: I remember, as if it were yesterday, how gallantly he behaved. The king sent to compliment him after some signal proof of courage and conduct, and asked what reward he would have. 'Sire,' answered the Englishman, 'give me the white plume you wore this day.' From that moment the Englishman's fortune was made."

"The flattery went farther than the valor!" said I, smiling, as I recognized in the anecdote the first great step which my father had made in the ascent of fortune.

"*Sacristie!*" cried the Frenchman, "it was no flattery then. We so idolized the king, that mere truth would have seemed disloyalty; and we no more thought that praise, however extravagant, was adulation, when directed to him, than we should have thought there was adulation in the praise we would have given to our first mistress. But it is all changed now! Who now cares for the old priest-ridden monarch?"

And upon this the veteran, having conquered the momentary enthusiasm which the remembrance of the king's earlier glories had excited, transferred all his genius of description to the opposite side of the question, and declaimed, with great energy, upon the royal vices and errors, which were so charming in prosperity, and were now so detestable in adversity.

While we were thus conversing we approached Versailles. We thought the vicinity of the town seemed unusually deserted. We entered the main street—crowds were assembed—an universal murmur was heard—excitement sat on every countenance. Here an old crone was endeavoring to explain something, evidently

beyond his comprehension, to a child of three years old; who with open mouth and fixed eyes, seemed to make up in wonder for the want of intelligence; there a group of old disbanded soldiers occupied the way, and seemed, from their muttered conversations, to vent a sneer and a jest at a priest, who with downward countenance and melancholy air, was hurrying along.

One young fellow was calling out—"At least, it is a holyday, and I shall go to Paris!"—and, as a contrast to him, an old withered artisan, leaning on a gold-headed cane, with sharp avarice eloquent in every line of his face, muttered out to a fellow-miser—"No business to-day—no money, John—no money!" One knot of women, of all ages, close by which my horse passed, was entirely occupied with a single topic, and that so vehemently, that I heard the leading words of the discussion. "Mourning—becoming—what fashion?—how long?—*O ciel!*" Thus do follies weave themselves round the bier of death!

"What is the news, gentlemen?" said I.

"News—what, you have not heard it!—The king is dead!"

"Louis dead—Louis the Great, dead!" cried my companion.

"Louis the Great!" said a sullen-looking man—"Louis the persecutor!"

"Ah, he's a Huguenot?" cried another with haggard cheeks and hollow eyes, scowling at the last speaker. "Never mind what he says—the king was right when he refused protection to the Heretics—but was he right when he levied such taxes on the Catholics?"

"Hush!" said a third—"hush—it may be unsafe to speak—there are spies about; for my part, I think it was all the fault of the Noblesse."

"And the Favorites!" cried a soldier, fiercely.

"And the Harlots!" cried a hag of eighty.

"And the Priests!" muttered the Huguenot.

"And the Tax-gatherers!" added the lean Catholic.

We rode slowly on. My comrade was evidently and powerfully affected.

"So, he is dead!" said he. "Dead!—well—well—peace be with him. He conquered in Holland—he humbled Genoa—he dictated to Spain—he commanded Condé and Turenne—he—Bah! What is all this" (then, turning abruptly to me, my companion cried)—"I did not speak against the king, did I, sir?"

"Not much."

"I am glad of that—yes, very glad!" And the old man glared fiercely round on a troop of boys, who were audibly abusing the dead lion.

"I would have bit out my tongue, rather than it had joined in the base joy of these yelping curs. Heavens! when I think what shouts I have heard—when the name of that man, then deemed little less than a god, was but breathed!—and now—why do you look at me, sir? My eyes are moist—I know it, sir—I know it. The old battered, broken soldier, who made his first campaigns, when that which is now dust was the idol of France, and the pupil of Turenne—the old soldier's eyes shall not be dry, though there is not another tear shed in the whole of this great empire."

"Your three sons?" said I; "you did not weep for them?"

"No, sir—I loved them when I was old; but I loved Louis *when I was young!*"

"Your oppressed and pillaged country?" said I—"think of that."

"No, sir, I will not think of it!" cried the old warrior in a passion. "I will not think of it—to-day, at least."

"You are right, my brave friend; in the grave let us bury even public wrongs—but let us not bury their remembrance. May the joy we read in every face that we pass—joy at the death of one whom idolatry once almost seemed to deem immortal—be a lesson to future kings!"

My comrade did not immediately answer; but, after a pause, and we had turned our backs upon the town, he said—

"Joy, sir—you spoke of joy! Yes, we are Frenchmen—we forgive our rulers easily for private vices and petty faults; but we never forgive them if they commit the greatest of faults, and suffer a stain to rest upon—"

"What?" I asked, as my comrade broke off.

"The national glory, Monsieur!" said he.

"You have hit it," said I, smiling at the turgid sentiment which was so really and deeply felt. "And had you written folios upon the character of your countrymen, you could not have expressed it better."

CHAPTER VIII.

In which there is reason to fear that Princes are not invariably free from Human Peccadillos.

On entering Paris, my veteran fellow-traveller took leave of me, and I proceeded to my hotel. When the first excitement of my thoughts was a little subsided, and after some feelings of a more public nature, I began to consider what influence the king's death was likely to have on my own fortunes: I could not but see, at a glance, that for the cause of the Chevalier, and the destiny of his present exertions in Scotland, it was the most fatal event that could have occurred.

The balance of power, in the contending factions of France, would, I foresaw, lie entirely between the Duke of Orleans and the legitimatized children of the late king; the latter, closely leagued as they were with Madame de Maintenon, could not be much disposed to consider the welfare of Count Devereux; and my wishes, therefore, naturally settled on the former. I was not doomed to a long suspense. Every one knows, that the very next day the Duke of Orleans appeared before Parliament, and was proclaimed Regent—that the will of the late king was set aside—and that the Duke of Maine suddenly became as low in power as he had always been despicable in intellect. A little hubbub ensued—people in general laughed at the Regent's finesse—and the more sagacious admired the courage and address of which the finesse was composed. The Regent's mother wrote a letter of sixty-nine pages about it; and the Duchess of Maine boxed the duke's ears very heartily for not being as clever as herself. All Paris teemed with joyous forebodings; and the Regent, whom every one, some time ago, had suspected of poisoning his cousins, every one now deemed to be the most perfect prince that could possibly be imagined, and the very picture of *Henri Quatre*, in goodness as well as physiognomy. Three days after this event, one happened to myself, with which my public career may be said to commence.

I had spent the evening at a house in a distant part of Paris, and, invited by the beauty of the night, had dismissed my carriage, and was walking home alone, and on foot. Occupied with my reflections, and not very well acquainted with the dangerous and dark streets of Paris, in which it was very rare for those who have carriages to wander on foot, I insensibly strayed from my proper direction. When I first discovered this disagreeable fact, I was in a filthy and obscure lane rather than street, which I did not remember having ever honored with my presence before. While I was pausing in the vain hope and anxious endeavor to shape out some imaginary chart—some "map of the mind," by which to direct my bewildered course, I heard a confused noise proceed from another lane at right angles with the one in which I then was. I listened—the sound became more distinct—I recognized human voices in loud and angry altercation—a moment more, and there was a scream. Though I did not attach much importance to the circumstance, I thought I might as well approach nearer to the quarter of noise. I walked to the door of the house from which the scream proceeded; it was very small, and mean. Just as I neared it, a window was thrown open, and a voice cried—"Help! help! for God's sake, help!"

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Whoever you are, save us!" cried the voice, "and that instantly, or we shall be murdered:" and, the moment after, the voice ceased abruptly, and was succeeded by the clashing of swords.

I beat loudly at the door—I shouted out—no answer; the scuffle within seemed to increase; I saw a small blind alley to the left; one of the unfortunate women, to whom such places are homes, was standing in it.

"What possibility is there of entering the house?" I asked.

"Oh!" said she, "it does not matter; it is not the first time gentlemen have cut each other's throats *there*."

"What! is it a house of bad repute?"

"Yes; and where there are bullies who wear knives, and take purses—as well as ladies, who—"

"Good heavens!" cried I, interrupting her, "there is no time to be lost. Is there no way of entrance but at this door?"

"Yes, if you are bold enough to enter at another!"

"Where?"

"Down this alley."

Immediately I entered the alley—the woman pointed to a small, dark, narrow flight of stairs—I ascended—the sounds increased in loudness. I mounted to the second flight—a light streamed

from a door—the clashing of swords was distinctly audible within—I broke open the door, and found myself a witness and intruder in a scene at once ludicrous and fearful.

A table, covered with bottles and the remnants of a meal, was in the centre of the room; several articles of women's dress were scattered over the floor; two women of unequivocal description were clinging to a man richly dressed, and who having fortunately got behind an immense chair, that had been overthrown, probably in the scuffle, managed to keep off with awkward address a fierce-looking fellow, who had less scope for the ability of his sword arm, from the circumstance of his attempting to pull away the chair with his left hand. Whenever he stooped to effect this object, his antagonist thrust at him very vigorously, and had it not been for the embarrassment his female enemies occasioned him, the latter would, in all probability, have despatched or disabled his besieger. This fortified gentleman, being backed by the window, I immediately concluded to be the person who had called to me for assistance.

At the other corner of the apartment was another cavalier, who used his sword with singular skill, but who, being hard pressed by two lusty fellows, was forced to employ that skill rather in defence than attack. Altogether, the disordered appearance of the room, the broken bottles, the fumes with which the hot atmosphere teemed, the evident profligacy of the two women, the half undressed guise of the cavaliers, and the ruffian air and collected ferocity of the assailants, plainly denoted that it was one of those perilous festivals of pleasure in which imprudent gallants were often, in that day, betrayed by treacherous Dalilahs into the hands of Philistines, who, not contented with stripping them for the sake of plunder, frequently murdered them for the sake of secrecy.

Having taken a rapid, but satisfactory, survey of the scene, I did not think it necessary to make any preparatory parley. I threw myself upon the nearest bravo with so hearty a good will that I ran him through the body before he had recovered his surprise at my appearance. This somewhat startled the other two; they drew back and demanded quarter.

"Quarter, indeed!" cried the farther cavalier, releasing himself from his astonished female assailants, and leaping nimbly over his bulwark, into the centre of the room—"quarter, indeed, rascally *ivrognes!* No; it is our turn now; and, by Joseph of Arimathea! you shall sup with Pilate to night." So saying, he pressed his old assailant so fiercely that, after a short contest, the latter retreated till he had backed himself to the door, he then suddenly turned round, and vanished in a twinkling. The third and remaining ruffian was far from thinking himself a match for three men; he fell on his knees, and implored mercy. However, the *ci-devant* sustainer of the besieged chair was but little disposed to afford him the clemency he demanded, and approached the crestfallen bravo with so grim an air of truculent delight, brandishing his sword, and uttering the most terrible threats, that there would have been small doubt of the final catastrophe of the trembling bully, had not the other gallant thrown himself in the way of his friend.

"Put up thy sword," said he, laughing, and yet with an air of command; "we must not court crime, and then punish it." Then, turning to the bully, he said, "Rise, Sir Rascal! the devil spares thee a little longer, and this gentleman will not disobey *his*, as well as *thy* master's wishes.—Begone!"

The fellow wanted no second invitation: he sprang to his legs, and to the door. The disappointed cavalier assisted his descent down the stairs with a kick, that would have done the work of the sword to any flesh not accustomed to similar applications. Putting up his rapier, the milder gentleman then turned to *the ladies*, who lay huddled together under shelter of the chair which their intended victim had deserted.

"Ah, Mesdames," said he, gravely, and with a low bow, "I am sorry for your disappointment. As long as you contented yourselves with robbery, it were a shame to have interfered with your innocent amusements; but cold steel becomes serious. Monsieur D'Argenson will favor you with some inquiries tomorrow; at present, I recommend you to empty what remains in the bottle. Adieu! Monsieur, to whom I am so greatly indebted, honor me with your arm down these stairs. "You" (turning to his friend) "will follow us, and keep a sharp look behind. *Allons! Vive Henri Quatre!*"

As we descended the dark and rough stairs, my new companion said, "What an excellent antidote to the effects of the vin de champagne is this same fighting. I feel as if I had not

tasted a drop these six hours. What fortune brought you hither, Monsieur?" addressing me.

We were now at the foot of the first flight of stairs, a high and small window admitted the moonlight, and we saw each other's faces clearly.

"That fortune," answered I, looking at my acquaintance steadily, but with an expression of profound respect—"that fortune which watches over kingdoms, and which, I trust, may in no place or circumstance be a deserter from your Highness."

"Highness!" said my companion, coloring, and darting a glance, first at his friend and then at me. "Hist—sir, you know me, then—speak low—you know, then, for whom you have drawn your sword?"

"Yes, so please your Highness. I have drawn it this night for Philip of Orleans; I trust yet, in another scene, and for another cause, to draw it for the Regent of France!"

CHAPTER IX.

A Prince—an Audience—and a Secret Embassy.

THE Regent remained silent for a moment: he then said, in an altered and grave voice, "*C'est bien, Monsieur!* I thank you for the distinction you have made. It were not amiss" (he added, turning to his comrade), "that *you* would now and then deign, henceforward, to make the same distinction. But this is neither time nor place for parlance. On, gentlemen!"

We left the house, passed into the street, and moved on rapidly, and in silence, till the constitutional gaiety of the duke, recovering its ordinary tone, he said, with a laugh—

"Well, now, it is a little hard that a man who has been toiling all day for the public good should feel ashamed of indulging for an hour or two at night in his private amusements; but so it is. 'Once grave, always grave!' is the maxim of the world—eh, Chatran?"

The companion bowed. "'Tis a very good saying, please your royal Highness, and is intended to warn us from the sin of *ever* being grave!"

"Ha-ha! you have a great turn for morality, my good *Chatran!*" cried the duke, "and would draw a rule for conduct out of the wickedest *bon mot* of Dubois. Monsieur, pardon me, but I have seen you before: you are the Count—"

"Devereux, Monseigneur."

"True, true! I have heard much of you: you are intimate with Milord Bolingbroke. Would that I had fifty friends like *him*."

"Monseigneur would have little trouble in his regency if his wish were realized," said Chatran.

"*Tant mieux*, so long as I had little odium, as well as little trouble—a happiness which, thanks to you and Dubois, I am not likely to enjoy—But there is the carriage!"

And the duke pointed to a dark, plain carriage, which we had suddenly come upon.

"Count Devereux," said the merry Regent, "you will enter: my duty requires that, at this seductive hour, I should see a young gentleman of your dangerous age safely lodged at his hotel!"

We entered, Chatran gave the orders, and we drove off rapidly.

The Regent hummed a tune, and his two companions listened to it in respectful silence.

"Well, well, Messieurs," said he, bursting out at last into open voice, "I will ever believe, in future, that the gods *do* look benignantly on us worshippers of the Alma Venus! Do you know much of Tibullus, Monsieur Devereux? And can you assist my memory with the continuation of the line—

'Quisquis amore tenetur, eat—'"
——————"'tutusque sacerque
Qualibet. insidias non timuisse decet.'" *

answered I.

"*Bon!*" cried the duke. "I love a gentleman, from my very soul, when he can both fight well and read Latin! I hate a man who is merely a wine-bibber and blade-drawer. By St. Louis, though it is an excellent thing to fill the stomach, especially with Tokay, yet there is no reason in the world why we should not fill the head too. But here we are. Adieu, Monsieur Devereux—we shall see you at the Palace."

I expressed my thanks briefly at the Regent's condescension, descended from the carriage (which instantly drove off with renewed celerity), and once more entered my hotel.

* Whoever is possessed by Love may go safe and holy whithersoever he likes. It becomes not him to fear snares.

Two or three days after my adventure with the Regent, I thought it expedient to favor that eccentric prince with a visit. During the early part of his regency, it is well known how successfully he combated with his natural indolence, and how devotedly his mornings were surrendered to the toils of his new office; but when pleasure has grown habit, it requires a stronger mind than that of *Philippe Debonnair* to give it a permament successor in business. Pleasure is, indeed, like the genius of the fable, the most useful of slaves, while you subdue it: the most intolerable of tyrants the moment your negligence suffers it to subdue you.

The hours in which the prince gave audience to the comrades of his lighter, rather than graver, occupations, were those immediately before and after his levee. I thought that this would be the best season for me to present myself. Accordingly, one morning after the levee, I repaired to his palace.

The anti-chamber was already crowded. I sat myself quietly down in one corner of the room, and looked upon the motley groups around. I smiled inly as they reminded me of the scenes my own anti-room, in my younger days of folly and fortune, was wont to exhibit; the same heterogeneous assemblage (only upon a grander scale) of the ministers to the physical appetites and the mental tastes. There was the fretting and impudent mountebank, side by side with the gentle and patient scholar —the harlot's envoy and the priest's messenger—the agent of the police, and the licensed breaker of its laws—there;—but what boots a more prolix description? What is the anti-room of a great man, who has many wants and many tastes, but a panorama of the blended disparities of this compounded world.

While I was moralizing, a gentleman suddenly thrust his head out of a door, and appeared to reconnoitre us. Instantly, the crowd swept up to him. I thought I might as well follow the general example, and pushing aside some of my fellow loiterers, I presented myself and my name to the gentleman, with the most ingratiating air I could command.

The gentleman, who was tolerably civil for a great man's great man, promised that my visit should be immediately announced to the prince; and then, with the politest bow imaginable, slapped the door in my face. After I had waited about seven or eight minutes longer, the gentleman re-appeared, singled me from the crowd, and desired me to follow him; I passed through another room, and was presently in the Regent's presence.

I was rather startled when I saw, by the morning light, and in déshabille, the person of that royal martyr to dissipation. His countenance was red, but bloated, and a weakness in his eyes added considerably to the jaded and haggard expression of his features. A proportion of stomach rather inclined to corpulency, seemed to betray the taste for the pleasures of the table, which the most radically coarse, and yet (strange to say) the most generally accomplished and really good-natured of royal profligates, combined with his other qualifications. He was yawning very elaborately over a great heap of papers, when I entered. He finished his yawn (as if it were too brief and too precious a recreation to lose), and then said, "Good morning, Monsieur Devereux; I am glad that you have found me out *at last*."

"I was afraid, Monseigneur, of appearing an intruder on your presence, by offering my homage to you before."

"So like my good fortune," said the Regent, turning to a man seated at another table at some distance, whose wily, astute countenance, piercing eye, and licentious expression of lip and brow, indicated at once the ability and vice which composed his character. "So like my good fortune, is it not, Dubois? If ever I meet with a tolerably pleasant fellow, who does not disgrace me by his birth or reputation, he is always so terribly afraid of intruding! and whenever I pick up a respectable personage without wit, or a wit without respectability, he attaches himself to me like a burr, and can't live a day without inquiring after my health."

Dubois smiled, bowed, but did not answer, and I saw that his look was bent darkly and keenly upon me.

"Well," said the prince, "what think you of our opera, Count Devereux?—It beats your English one—eh!"

"Ah, certainly, monseigneur; ours is but a reflection of yours."

"So says your friend, Milord Bolingbroke, a person who knows about operas almost as much as I do, which, vanity apart, is saying a great deal. I should like very well to visit England—what should I learn best there? In

Spain (I shall always love Spain), I learnt to cook."

"Monseigneur, I fear," answered I, smiling, "could obtain but little additional knowledge in that art in our barbarous country. A few rude and imperfect inventions have, indeed, of late years astonished the cultivators of the science; but the night of ignorance rests still upon its main principles and leading truths. Perhaps, what Monseigneur would find best worth studying in England would be—the women."

"Ah, the women all over the world!" cried the Duke, laughing; "but I hear your *belles Anglaises* are sentimental, and love *à l'Arcadienne.*"

"It is true at present: but who shall say how far Monseigneur's example might enlighten them in a train of thought so erroneous?"

"True. Nothing like example, eh, Dubois? What would Philip of Orleans have been but for thee?"

"'L'exemple souvent n'est qu'un miroir trompeur;
Quelquefois l'un se brise où l'autre s'est sauvé,
Et par où l'un périt, un autre est conservé,'" *

answered Dubois out of *Cinna.*

"Corneille is right," rejoined the Regent. "After all, to do thee justice, *mon petit Abbé*, example has little to do with corrupting us. Nature pleads the cause of Pleasure, as Hyperides pleaded that of Phryne. She has no need of eloquence: she unveils the bosom of her client, and the client is acquitted."

"Monseigneur shows at least that he has learnt to profit by my humble instructions in the classics," said Dubois.

The Duke did not answer. I turned my eyes to some drawings on the table—I expressed my admiration of them. "They are mine," said the Regent. "Ah! I should have been much more accomplished as a private gentleman than I fear I ever shall be as a public man of toil and business. Business—bah! But Necessity is the only real sovereign in the world, the only despot for whom there is no law. What! are you going already, Count Devereux?"

"Monseigneur's anti-room is crowded with less fortunate persons than myself, whose sins of envy and covetousness I am now answerable for."

"Ah—well! I must hear the poor devils; the only pleasure I have is in seeing how easily I can make them happy. Would to heaven, Dubois, that one could govern a great kingdom only by fair words! Count Devereux, you have seen me to-day as my acquaintance; see me again as my petitioner. *Bon jour, Monsieur.*"

And I retired, very well pleased with my reception: from that time, indeed, during the rest of my short stay at Paris, the prince honored me with his especial favor. But I have dwelt too long on my sojourn at the French court. The persons whom I have described, and who alone made the sojourn memorable, must be my apology.

One day I was honored by a visit from the Abbé Dubois. After a short conversation upon different things, he accosted me thus:—

"You are aware, Count Devereux, of the partiality which the Regent has conceived towards you. Fortunate would it be for that Prince" (here Dubois elevated his brows with an ironical and arch expression), "so good by disposition, so injured by example, if his partiality had been more frequently testified towards gentlemen of your merit. A mission of considerable importance, and one demanding great personal address, gives his Royal Highness an opportunity of testifying his esteem for you. He honored me with a conference on the subject yesterday, and has now commissioned me to explain to you the technical objects of this mission, and to offer to you the honor of undertaking it. Should you accept the proposals, you will wait upon his highness before his levee to-morrow."

Dubois then proceeded, in the clear rapid manner peculiar to him, to comment on the state of Europe. "For France," said he, in concluding his sketch, "peace is absolutely necessary. A drained treasury, an exhausted country, require it. You see, from what I have said, that Spain and England are the principal quarters from which we are to dread hotilities. Spain we must guard against—England we must propitiate; the latter object is easy in England in any case, whether James or George be uppermost. For whoever is king in England will have quite enough to do at home to make him agree willingly enough to peace abroad The former requires a less simple and a more

* Example is often but a deceitful mirror; where sometimes one destroys himself, while another comes off safe; and where one perishes, another is preserved.

enlarged policy. I fear the ambition of the Queen of Spain, and the turbulent genius of her minion Alberoni. We must fortify ourselves by new forms of alliance, at various courts, which shall at once defend *us* and intimidate our enemies. We wish to employ some nobleman of ability and address, on a secret mission to Russia—will you be that person? Your absence from Paris will be but short—you will see a very droll country, and a very droll sovereign; you will return hither, doubly the rage, and with a just claim to more important employment hereafter. What say you to the proposal?"

"I must hear more," said I, "before I decide."

The Abbé renewed. It is needless to repeat all the particulars of the commission that he enumerated. Suffice it that after a brief consideration, I accepted the honor proposed to me. The Abbé wished me joy, relapsed into his ordinary strain of coarse levity for a few minutes, and then reminding me that I was to attend the Regent on the morrow, departed. It was easy to see that in the mind of that subtle and crafty ecclesiastic, with whose manœuvres private intrigues were always blended with public, this offer of employment veiled a desire to banish me from the immediate vicinity of the good-natured Regent, whose favor the aspiring Abbé wished at that exact moment exclusively to monopolize. Mere men of pleasure he knew would not interfere with his aims upon the prince; mere men of business still less: but a man who was thought to combine the capacities of both, and who was moreover distinguished by the Regent, he deemed a more dangerous rival than the inestimable person thus suspected really was.

However, I cared little for the honest man's motives. Adventure to me had always greater charms than dissipation, aud it was far more agreeable to the nature of my ambition, to win distinction by any honorable method, than by favoritism at a court, so hollow, so unprincipled, and so grossly licentious as that of the Regent. There to be the most successful courtier was to be the most amusing profligate. Alas, when the heart is away from its objects, and the taste revolts at its excess, Pleasure is worse than palling—it is a torture!—and the devil in Jonson's play did not perhaps greatly belie the truth when he averred "that the pains in his native country were pastimes to the life of a person of Fashion."

The Duke of Orleans received me the next morning with more than his wonted *bonhommie*. What a pity that so good-natured a prince should have been so bad a man! He enlarged more easily and carelesly than his worthy preceptor had done upon the several points to be observed in my mission—then condescendingly told me he was very sorry to lose me from his court, and asked me, at all events, before I left Paris, to be a guest at one of his select suppers. I appreciated this honor at its just value. To these suppers none were asked but the Prince's chums, or *roues*,* as he was pleased to call them. As, *entre nous*, these chums were for the most part the most good-for-nothing people in the kingdom, I could not but feel highly flattered at being deemed, by so deep a judge of character as the Regent, worthy to join them. I need not say that the invitation was eagerly accepted, nor that I left *Philippe le Debonnaire* impressed with the idea of his being the most admirable person in Europe. What a fool a great man is if he does not study to be affable—weigh a prince's condescension in one scale, and all the cardinal virtues in the other, and the condescension will outweigh them all! The Regent of France ruined his country as much as he well could do, and there was not a dry eye when he died!

A day had now affected a change—a great change in my fate. A new court—a new theatre of action—a new walk of ambition, were suddenly opened to me. Nothing could be more promising than my first employment—nothing could be more pleasing than the anticipation of change. "I must force myself to be agreeable to-night," said I, as I dressed for the Regent's supper. "I must leave behind me the remembrance of a *bon mot*, or I shall be forgotten."

And I was right. In that whirlpool, the capital of France, everything sinks but wit—*that* is always on the surface, and we must cling to it with a firm grasp, if we would not go down to—"the deep oblivion."

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* The term *Roue*, now so comprehensive, was first given by the Regent to a select number of his friends; according to them, because they would be broken on the wheel for his sake; according to himself, because they deserved to be so broken.—Ed.

CHAPTER X.

Royal Exertions for the good of the People.

WHAT a singular scene was that private supper with the Regent of France and his *roues!* The party consisted of twenty: nine gentlemen of the court besides myself, four men of low rank and character—but admirable buffoons—and six ladies, such ladies as the duke loved best—witty, lively, sarcastic, and good for nothing.

De Chatran accosted me.

"*Je suis ravi, mon cher Monsieur Devereux,*" said he, gravely, "to see you in such excellent company—you must be a little surprised to find yourself here!"

"Not at all! every scene is worth one visit. He, my good Monsieur Chatran, who goes to the House of Correction once is a philosopher—he who goes twice is a rogue!"

"Thank you, Count, what am I then—I have been *here* twenty times?"

"Why, I will answer you with a story. The soul of a Jesuit one night, when its body was asleep, wandered down to the lower regions; Satan caught it, and was about to consign it to some appropriate place; the soul tried hard to excuse itself: you know what a cunning thing a Jesuit's soul is! 'Monsieur Satan,' said the spirit; 'no king should punish a traveller as he would a native. Upon my honor, I am merely here *en voyageur*.' 'Go, then,' said Satan, and the soul flew back to its body. But the Jesuit died, and came to the lower regions a second time. He was brought before his Satanic majesty, and made the same excuse. 'No, no,' cried Beelzebub; 'once here is to be only *le diable voyageur*—twice here, and you are *le diable tout de bon*.'"

"Ha! ha! ha!" said Chatran, laughing; "I then am the *diable tout de bon!* 'tis well I *am no worse;* for we reckon the *roues* a devilish deal worse than the very worst of the devils—but see, the Regent approaches us."

And, leaving a very pretty and gay looking lady, the Regent sauntered towards us. It was in walking, by the by, that he lost all the grace of his mien. I don't know, however, that one wishes a great man to be graceful, so long as he's familiar.

"Aha, Monsieur Devereux!" said he, "we will give you some lessons in cooking to-night—we shall show you how to provide for yourself in that barbarous country which you are about to visit. *Tout voyageur doit tout savoir!*"

"A very admirable saying; which leads me to understand that *Monseigneur* has been a great traveller," said I.

"Ay, in all things and *all places*—eh, Count!" answered the Regent, smiling; "but," here he lowered his voice a little, "I have never yet learned how *you* came so opportunely to our assistance that night. *Dieu me damne!* but it reminds me of the old story of the two sisters meeting at a gallant's house. 'Oh, sister, how came *you* here?' said one, in virtuous amazement. '*Ciel! ma sœur!*' cries the other; 'what brought *you?*'" *

"Monseigneur is pleasant," said I, laughing; "but a man does now and then (though I own it is very seldom) do a good action, without having previously resolved to commit a bad one!"

"I like your parenthesis," cried the Regent, "it reminds me of my friend St. Simon, who thinks so ill of mankind, that I asked him one day, whether it was possible for him to despise any thing more than men? 'Yes,' said he, with a low bow, 'women!'"

"His experience," said I, glancing at the female part of the coterie, "was, I must own, likely to lead him to that opinion."

"None of your sarcasms, Monsieur," cried the Regent. "*L'amusement est un des besoins de l'homme*—as I hear young *Arouet* very pithily said the other day; and we owe gratitude to whomsoever it may be that supplies that want. Now, you will agree with me that none supply it like women; therefore we owe them gratitude—therefore we must not hear them abused. Logically proved, I think!"

"Yes, indeed," said I, "it is a pleasure to find they have so able an advocate; and that your Highness can so well apply to yourself *both* the assertions in the motto of the great master of fortification, Vauban—'I destroy, but I defend.'"

"Enough," said the duke gaily, "now to *our fortifications;*" and he moved away towards the women; I followed the royal example; and soon found myself seated next to a pretty, and very small woman. We entered into conversation; and, when once begun, my fair compan-

* The reader will remember a better version of this anecdote in one of the most popular of the English comedies.—ED.

ion took care that it should not cease, without a miracle. By the goddess Facundia, what volumes of words issued from that little mouth! and on all subjects too! church—state—law—politics—play-houses—lampoons—lace—liveries—kings—queens—roturiers—beggars—you would have thought, had you heard her, so vast was her confusion of all things, that chaos had come again. Our royal host did not escape her. "You never before supped here *en famille*," said she,—"*Mon Dieu!* it will do your heart good to see how much the Regent will eat. He has such an appetite—you know he never eats any dinner, in order to eat the more at supper. You see that little dark woman he is talking to?—well, she is *Madame de Parabère*—he calls her his little black crow—was there ever such a pet name? Can you guess why he likes her? Nay, never take the trouble of thinking—I will tell you at once—simply because she eats and drinks so much. *Parole d'honneur*, 'tis true. The Regent says he likes sympathy in all things!—is it not droll? What a hideous old man is that *Nocé*—his face looks as if it had caught the rainbow. That impudent fellow *Dubois* scolded him for squeezing so many *louis* out of the good Regent. The yellow creature attempted to deny the fact. 'Nay,' cried Dubois, 'you cannot contradict me; I see their very ghosts in your face.'"

While my companion was thus amusing herself, *Noce*, unconscious of her panegyric on his personal attractions, joined us.

"Ah! my dear *Noce*," said the lady, most affectionately, "how well you are looking! I am delighted to see you."

"I do not doubt it," soid *Noce*, "for I have to inform you that your petition is granted; your husband will have the place."

"Oh, how eternally grateful I am to you!" cried the lady in an ecstasy; "my poor, dear husband will be so rejoiced. I wish I had wings to fly to him!"

The gallant *Noce* uttered a compliment—I thought myself *de trop*, and moved away. I again encountered *Chatran*.

"I overheard your conversation with Madame la Marquise," said he, smiling; "she has a bitter tongue—has she not?"

"Very! how she abused the poor rogue *Noce!*"

"Yes, and yet he is her lover!"

"Her lover!—you astonish me; why, she seemed almost fond of her husband—the tears came in her eyes when she spoke of him."

"She *is* fond of him!" said Chatran, drily. "She loves the ground he treads on—it is precisely for that reason she favors Nocé; she is never happy but when she is procuring something *pour son cher bon mari*. She goes to spend a week at Nocé's country house, and writes to her husband, with a pen dipped in her blood, saying, 'My *heart* is with thee!'"

"Certainly," said I, "France is the land of enigmas; the sphynx must have been a *Parisienne*. And when Jupiter made man, he made two natures utterly distinct from one another. One was *Human nature*, and the other *French nature!*"

At this moment supper was announced. We all adjourned to another apartment, where, to my great surprise, I observed the cloth laid—the sideboard loaded—the wines ready, but nothing to eat on the table! A Madame de Savori, who was next me, noted my surprise.

"What astonishes you, Monsieur?" said she.

"*Nothing*, Madame!" said I, "that is, the absence of *all* things."

"What! you expected to see supper?"

"I own my delusion—I did."

"It is not cooked yet!"

"Oh! well, I can wait!"

"And officiate too!" said the lady;—"in a word, this is one of the Regent's cooking nights."

Scarcely had I received this explanation, before there was a general adjournment to an inner apartment, where all the necessary articles for cooking were ready to our hand.

"The Regent led the way,
To light us to our prey,"

and, with an irresistible gravity and importance of demeanor, entered upon the duties of *chef*. In a very short time we were all engaged. Nothing could exceed the zest with which every one seemed to enter into the rites of the kitchen. You would have imagined they had been born scullions, they handled the *batterie de cuisine* so naturally. As for me, I sought protection with Madame de Savori; and as, fortunately, she was very deeply skilled in the science, she had occasion to employ me in many minor avocations which her experience taught her would not be above my comprehension.

After we had spent a certain time in this dignified occupation, we returned to the *salle à manger*. The attendants placed the dishes on the table, and we all fell to. Whether out of self-love to their own performances, or complaisance to the performances of others, I cannot exactly say, but certain it is that all the guests acquitted themselves *à merveille;* you would not have imagined the Regent the only one who had gone without dinner to eat the more at supper. Even that devoted wife to her *cher bon mari*, who had so severely dwelt upon the good Regent's infirmity, occupied herself with an earnestness that would have seemed almost wolf-like in a famished grenadier.

Very slight indeed was the conversation till the supper was nearly over; then the effects of the wine became more perceptible. The Regent was the first person who evinced that he had eat sufficiently to be able to talk. Utterly dispensing with the slightest veil of reserve or royalty, he leant over the table, and poured forth a whole tide of jests. The guests then began to think it was indecorous to stuff themselves any more, and, as well as they were able, they followed their host's example. But the most amusing personages were the buffoons: they mimicked, and joked, and lampooned, and lied as if by inspiration. As the bottle circulated, and talk grew louder, the lampooning and the lying were not, however, confined to the buffoons. On the contrary, the best born and best bred people seemed to excel the most in those polite arts. Every person who boasted a fair name, or a decent reputation at court, was seized, condemned, and mangled in an instant. And how elaborately the good folks slandered! It was no hasty word and flippant repartee which did the business of the absent —there was a precision, a polish, a labor of malice, which showed that each person had brought so many reputations already cut up. The good natured convivialists differed from all other backbiters that I have ever met, in the same manner as the toads of Surinam differ from all other toads, viz.: their venomous offspring were not half formed, misshapen tadpoles of slander, but sprung at once into life—well shaped and fully developed.

"*Chantons!*" cried the Regent, whose eyes, winking and rolling, gave token of his approaching that state which equals the beggar to the king, "let us have a song. *Noce*, lift up thy voice, and let us hear what the tokay has put into thy head!"

Noce obeyed, and sang as men half drunk generally do sing.

"*O Ciel!*" whispered the malicious Savori, "what a hideous screech—one would think he had *turned his face into a voice!*"

"*Bravissimo!*" cried the duke, when his guest had ceased,—"what happy people we are! Our doors are locked—not a soul can disturb us—we have plenty of wine—we are going to get drunk—and we have all Paris to abuse! what were you saying of Marshal Villars, my little Parabère?"

And pounce went the little Parabère upon the unfortunate marshal. At last, slander had a respite—nonsense began its reign—the full inspiration descended upon the orgies—the good people lost the use of their faculties. Noise—clamor, uproar, broken bottles, falling chairs, and (I grieve to say) their occupants falling too—conclude the scene of the royal supper. Let us drop the curtain.

CHAPTER XI.

An Interview.

I WENT a little out of my way, on departing from Paris, to visit Lord Bolingbroke, who at that time was in the country. There are some men whom one never really sees in capitals; one sees their masks, not themselves; Bolingbroke was one. It was in retirement, however brief it might be, that his true nature expanded itself, and, weary of being admired, he allowed one to love, and even in the wildest course of his earlier excesses, to respect him. My visit was limited to a few hours, but it made an indelible impression on me.

"Once more," I said, as we walked to and fro in the garden of his temporary retreat, "once more you are in your element; minister and statesman of a prince, and a chief supporter of the great plans which are to restore him to his throne."

A slight shade passed over Bolingbroke's fine brow. "To you, my constant friend," said he, "to you—who of all my friends alone remained true in exile, and unshaken by misfortune—to

you I will confide a secret that I would entrust to no other. I repent me already of having espoused this cause. I did so while yet the disgrace of an unmerited attainder tingled in my veins; while I was in the full tide of those violent and warm passions which have so often misled me. Myself attainted — the best beloved of my associates in danger—my party deserted, and seemingly lost but for some bold measure such as then offered; these were all that I saw. I listened eagerly to representations I now find untrue; and I accepted that rank and power from one prince which were so rudely and gallingly torn from me by another. I perceive that I have acted imprudently, but what is done, is done; no private scruples, no private interest, shall make me waver in a cause that I have once pledged myself to serve; and if I *can* do aught to make a weak cause powerful, and a divided party successful, I will; but, Devereux, you are wrong, this is *not* my element. Ever in the paths of strife, I have sighed for quiet; and, while most eager in pursuit of ambition, I have languished the most fondly for content. The littleness of intrigue disgusts me, and while *the branches* of my power soared the highest, and spread with the most luxuriance, it galled me to think of the miry soil in which that power was condemned to strike *the roots*,* upon which it stood, and by which it must be nourished."

I answered Bolingbroke as men are wont to answer statesmen who complain of their calling—half in compliment, half in contradiction, but he replied with unusual seriousness—

"Do not think I affect to speak thus: you know how eagerly I snatch any respite from state, and how unmovedly I have borne the loss of prosperity and of power. You are now about to enter those perilous paths which I have trod for years. Your passions, like mine, are strong! Beware, oh, beware, how you indulge them without restraint! They are the fires which should warm; let them not be the fires which destroy."

Bolingbroke paused in evident and great agitation—he resumed: "I speak strongly, for I speak in bitterness; I was thrown early into the world; my whole education had been framed to make me ambitious; it succeeded in its end. I was ambitious, and of all success —success in pleasure, success in fame. To wean me from the former, my friends persuaded me to marry; they chose my wife for her connections and her fortune, and I gained those advantages at the expense of what was better than either—happiness! You know how unfortunate has been that marriage, and how young I was when it was contracted. Can you wonder that it failed in the desired effect? Every one courted me, every temptation assailed me; pleasure even became more alluring abroad, when at home I had no longer the hope of peace: the indulgence of one passion begat the indulgence of another; and, though my better sense *prompted* all my actions, it never *restrained* them to a proper limit. Thus the commencement of my actions has been generally prudent, and their *continuation* has deviated into rashness, or plunged into excess. Devereux, I have paid the forfeit of my errors with a terrible interest —when my motives have been pure, men have seen a fault in the conduct, and calumniated the motives; when my conduct has been blameless, men have remembered its former errors, and asserted that its present goodness only arose from some sinister intention—thus I have been termed crafty, when I was in reality rash, and that was called the inconsistency of interest which in reality was the inconstancy of passion.* I have reason, therefore, to warn you how you suffer your subjects to become your tyrants; and believe me no experience is

* Occasional Writer. — No. 1. The Editor has, throughout this work, usually, but not invariably, noted the passages in Bolingbroke's writings, in which there occur similes, illustrations, or striking thoughts, correspondent with those in the text.

* This I do believe to be the real (though perhaps it is a new) light in which Lord Bolingbroke's life and character are to be viewed. The same writers who tell us of his ungovernable passions, always prefix to his name the epithets "designing, cunning, crafty," etc. Now I will venture to tell these historians that, if they had studied human nature instead of party pamphlets, they would have discovered that there are certain incompatible qualities which can never be united in one character—that no man can have violent passions *to which he is in the habit of yielding*, and be systematically crafty and designing. No man can be all heat, and at the same time all coolness; but opposite causes not unoften produce like effects. Passion usually makes men changeable, so sometimes does craft; hence the mistake of the uninquiring or the shallow; and hence while * * * writes, and * * * * compiles, will the characters of great men be transmitted to posterity mis-stated and belied.—Ed.

so deep as that of one who has committed faults, and who has discovered their causes.

"Apply, my dear lord, that experience to your future career. You remember what the most sagacious of all pedants,* even though he was an emperor, has so happily expressed—'Repentance is a goddess, and the preserver of those who have erred.'"

"May I *find* her so!" answered Bolingbroke; "but as *Montaigne* or *Charron* would say † . . . . 'Every man is at once his own sharper and his own bubble.' We make vast promises to ourselves, and a passion, an example, sweeps even the remembrance of those promises from our minds. One is too apt to believe men hypocrites, if their conduct squares not with their sentiments; but *perhaps no vice is more rare, for no task is more difficult, than systematic hypocrisy:* and the same susceptiblity which exposes men to be easily impressed by the allurements of vice, renders them at heart most struck by the loveliness of virture. Thus, their language and their hearts worship the divinity of the latter, while their conduct strays the most erringly towards the false shrines over which the former presides. Yes! I have never been blind to the surpassing excellence of GOOD. The still, sweet whispers of virtue have been heard, even when the storm has been loudest, and the bark of Reason been driven the most impetuously over the waves: and, at this moment, I am impressed with a foreboding that, sooner or later, the whispers will not only be heard, but their suggestion be obeyed; and that, far from courts and intrigue, from dissipation and ambition, I shall learn, in retirement, the true principles of wisdom, and the real objects of life."

Thus did Bolingbroke converse, and thus did I listen, till it was time to depart. I left him impressed with a melancholy that was rather soothing than distasteful. Whatever were the faults of that most extraordinary and most dazzling genius, no one was ever more candid* in confessing his errors. A systematically bad man either ridicules what is good,—or disbelieves in its existence; but no man can be hardened in vice whose heart is still sensible of the excellence and the glory of virtue.

* The Emperor Julian. The original expression is paraphrased in the text.

† "Spirit of Patriotism."

* It is impossible to read the letter to Sir W. Windham, without being remarkably struck with the dignified and yet open candor which it displays. The same candor is equally visible in whatever relates *to himself*, in all Lord Bolingbroke's writings and correspondence, and yet candor is the last attribute usually conceded to him. But never was there a writer whom people have talked of more and read less; and I do not know a greater proof of this than the ever-repeated assertion (echoed from a most incompetent authority) of the said letter to Sir W. Windham being the finest of all Lord Bolingbroke's writings. It is an article of great value to the history of the times; but, as to all the higher graces and qualities of composition, it is one of the least striking (and on the other hand it is one of the most verbally incorrect) which he has bequeathed to us (the posthumous works always excepted). I am not sure whether the most brilliant passages—the most noble illustrations—the most profound reflections, and most useful truths—to be found in all his writings, are not to be gathered from the least popular of them—such as that volume entitled "Political Tracts."—ED.

BOOK FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

A Portrait.

MYSTERIOUS impulse at the heart, which never suffers us to be at rest, which urges us onward as by an unseen, yet irresistible, law —human planets in a petty orbit, hurried for ever and for ever, till our course is run and our light is quenched—through the circle of a dark and impenetrable destiny! art thou not some faint forecast and type of our wanderings hereafter? of the unslumbering nature of the soul? of the everlasting progress which we are predoomed to make through the countless steps, and realms, and harmonies in the infinite creation? Oh, often in my rovings have I dared to dream so—often have I soared on the wild wings of thought above the "smoke and stir" of this dim earth, and wrought, from the restless visions of my mind, a chart of the glories and the wonders which the released spirit may hereafter visit and behold!

What a glad awakening from self,—what a sparkling and fresh draught from a new source of being,—what a wheel within wheel, animating, impelling, arousing all the rest of this animal machine, is the the first excitement of Travel! The first free escape from the bonds of the linked and tame life of cities and social vices,—the jaded pleasure and the hollow love, the monotonous round of sordid objects and dull desires,—the eternal chain that binds us to things and beings, mockeries of ourselves,—alike, but oh, how different! the shock that brings us nearer to men only to make us strive against them, and learn, from the harsh contest of veiled deceit and open force, that the more we share the aims of others, the more deeply and basely rooted we grow to the littleness of self.

I passed more lingeringly through France than I did through the other portions of my *route*. I had dwelt long enough in the capital to be anxious to survey the country. It was then that the last scale which the magic of Louis Quatorze and the memory of his gorgeous court had left upon the moral eye, fell off, and I saw the real essence of that monarch's greatness, and the true relics of his reign. I saw the poor, and the degraded, and the racked, and the priest-ridden, tillers and peoplers of the soil, which made the substance beneath the glittering and false surface—the body of that vast empire, of which I had hitherto beheld only the face, and THAT darkly, and for the most part covered by a mask!

No man can look upon France, beautiful France, her rich soil, her temperate yet maturing clime, the gallant and bold spirits which she produces, her boundaries so indicated and protected by nature itself, her advantages of ocean and land, of commerce and agriculture, and not wonder that her prosperity should be so bloated, and her real state so wretched and diseased.

Let England draw the moral, and beware not only of wars which exhaust, but of Governments which impoverish. A waste of the public wealth is the most lasting of public afflictions; and "the treasury which is drained by extravagance must be refilled by crime." *

I remember one beautiful evening an accident to my carriage occasioned my sojourn for a whole afternoon in a small village. The *Cure* honored me with a visit, and we strolled, after a slight repast, into the hamlet. The priest was complaisant, quiet in manner, and not ill-informed, for his obscure station and scanty opportunities of knowledge; he did not seem, however, to possess the vivacity of his countrymen, but was rather melancholy and pensive,

* Tacitus.

not only in his expression of countenance, but his cast of thought.

"You have a charming scene here; I almost feel as if it were a sin to leave it so soon."

We were, indeed, in a pleasant and alluring spot at the time I addressed this observation to the good Cure. A little rivulet emerged from a copse to the left, and ran sparkling and dimpling beneath our feet, to deck with a more living verdure the village green, which it intersected with a winding, nor unmelodious stream. We had paused, and I was leaning against an old and solitary chesnut-tree, which commanded the whole scene. The village was a little in the rear, and the smoke from its few chimneys rose slowly to the silent and deep skies, not wholly unlike the human wishes, which, though they spring from the grossness and the fumes of earth, purify themselves as they ascend to Heaven. And from the village (when other sounds, which I shall note presently, were for an instant still), came the whoop of children, mellowed, by distance, into a confused, yet thrilling sound, which fell upon the heart like the voice of our gone childhood itself. Before, in the far expanse, stretched a chain of hills on which the autumn sun sunk slowly, pouring its yellow beams over groups of peasantry, which, on the opposite side of the rivulet, and at some interval from us, were scattered, partly over the green, and partly gathered beneath the shade of a little grove. The former were of the young, and those to whom youth's sports are dear, and were dancing to the merry music, which (ever and anon blended with the laugh and the tone of a louder jest) floated joyously on our ears. The fathers and matrons of the hamlet were inhaling a more quiet joy beneath the trees, and I involuntarily gave a tenderer interest to their converse by supposing them to sanction to each other the rustic loves which they might survey among their children.

"Will not Monsieur draw nearer to the dancers," said the Curé; "there is a plank thrown over the rivulet a little lower down?"

"No!" said I, "perhaps they are seen to better advantage where we are—what mirth will bear too close an inspection?"

"True, sir," remarked the priest, and he sighed.

'Yet," I resumed, musingly, and I spoke rather to myself than to my companion, "yet, how happy do they seem! what a revival of our Arcadian dreams are the flute and the dance, the glossy trees all glowing in the autumn sunset, the green sod, and the murmuring rill, and the buoyant laugh startling the satyr in his leafy haunts; and the rural loves which will grow sweeter still when the sun has set, and the twilight has made the sigh more tender, and the blush of a mellower hue! Ah, why is it only the revival of a dream? why must it be only an interval of labor and woe—the brief saturnalia of slaves—the green resting spot in a dreary and long road of travail and toil?"

"You are the first stranger I have met," said the Cure, "who seems to pierce beneath the thin veil of our Gallic gaiety; the first to whom the scene we now survey is fraught with other feelings than a belief in the happiness of our peasantry, and an envy at its imagined exuberance. But as it is not the happiest individuals, so I fear it is not the happiest nations, that are the gayest."

I looked at the Cure with some surprise. "Your remark is deeper than the ordinary wisdom of your tribe, my father," said I.

"I have travelled over three parts of the globe," answered the Curé; "I was not always intended for what I am;" and the priest's mild eyes flashed with a sudden light that as suddenly died away. "Yes, I have travelled over the greater part of the known world," he repeated, in a more quiet tone, "and I have noted that where a man has many comforts to guard, and many rights to defend, he necessarily shares the thought and the seriousness of those who feel the value of a treasure which they possess, and whose most earnest meditations are intent upon providing against its loss. I have noted, too, that the joy produced by a momentary suspense of labor is naturally great, in proportion to the toil; hence it is that no European mirth is so wild as that of the Indian slave, when a brief holiday releases him from his task. Alas! that very mirth is the strongest evidence of the weight of the previous chains; even as, in ourselves, we find the happiest moment we enjoy is that immediately succeeding the cessation of deep sorrow to the mind, or violent torture to the body." *

* This reflection, if true, may console us for the loss of those village dances and peasant holidays for which "merry England" was once celebrated. The loss of them has been ascribed to the gloomy influence of the

I was struck by this observation of the priest.

"I see now," said I, "that, as an Englishman, I have no reason to repine at the proverbial gravity of my countrymen, or to envy the lighter spirit of the sons of Italy and France."

"No," said the Curé, "the happiest nations are those in whose people you witness the least sensible reverses from gaiety to dejection; and that *thought*, which is the noblest characteristic of the isolated man, is also that of a people. Freemen are serious, they have objects at their heart worthy to engross attention. It is reserved for slaves to indulge in groans at one moment, and laughter at another."

"At that rate," said I, "the best sign for France will be when the gaiety of her sons is no longer a just proverb, and the laughing lip is succeeded by the thoughtful brow."

We remained silent for several minutes; our conversation had shed a gloom over the light scene before us, and the voice of the flute no longer sounded musically on my ear. I proposed to the Curé to return to my inn. As we walked slowly in that direction, I surveyed my companion more attentively than I had hitherto done. He was a model of masculine vigor and grace of form; and, had I not looked earnestly upon his cheek, I should have thought him likely to outlive the very oaks around the hamlet church where he presided. But the cheek was worn and hectic, and seemed to indicate that the keen fire which burns at the deep heart, unseen, but unslaking, would consume the mortal fuel, long before Time should even have commenced his gradual decay.

"You have travelled, then, much, sir," said I, and the tone of my voice was that of curiosity.

The good Curé penetrated into my desire to hear something of his adventures; and few are the recluses who are not gratified by the interest of others, or who are unwilling to reward it by recalling those portions of life most cherished by themselves. Before we parted that night, he told me his little history. He had been educated for the army; before he entered the profession he had seen the daughter of a neighbor—loved her—and the old story—she loved him again, and died before the love passed the ordeal of marriage. He had no longer a desire for glory, but he had for excitement. He sold his little property and travelled, as he had said, for nearly fourteen years, equally over the polished lands of Europe, and the far climates, where Truth seems fable, and Fiction finds her own legends realized or excelled.

He returned home, poor in pocket, and wearied in spirit. He became what I beheld him. "My lot is fixed now," said he, in conclusion; "but I find there is all the difference between quiet and content; my heart eats itself away here; it is the moth fretting the garment laid by, more than the storm or the fray would have worn it."

I said something, common-place enough, about solitude, and the blessings of competence, and the country. The Curé shook his head gently, but made no answer; perhaps he did wisely in thinking the feelings are ever beyond the reach of a stranger's reasoning. We parted more affectionately than acquaintances of so short a date usually do; and when I returned from Russia, I stopped at the village on purpose to inquire after him. A few months had done the work: the moth had already fretted away the human garment; and I walked to his lowly and nameless grave, and felt that it contained the only quiet in which monotony is not blended with regret!

CHAPTER II.

The entrance into Petersburgh—a Rencontre with an inquisitive and mysterious Stranger—Nothing like Travel.

It was certainly like entering a new world when I had the frigid felicity of entering Russia. I expected to have found Petersburgh a wonderful city, and I was disappointed; it was a wonderful beginning of a city, and that was all I ought to have expected. But never, I believe, was there a place which there was so much difficulty in arriving at: such winds—such climate—such police arrangements—arranged, too, by such fellows! six feet high, with nothing human about them, but their uncleanness and ferocity! Such vexatious delays, difficulties, ordeals, through which it was necessary to pass, and to pass, too, with an air

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Puritans; but it has never occurred to the good poets, who have so mourned over that loss, that it is also to be ascribed to the *liberty* which those Puritans *generalized*, if they did not introduce.—Ed.

of the most perfect satisfaction and content. By the Lord ! one would have imagined, at all events, it must be an earthly paradise, to be so arduous of access, instead of a Dutch-looking town, with comfortless canals, and the most terrible climate in which a civilized creature was ever frozen to death. "It is just the city a nation of bears would build, if bears ever became architects," said I to myself, as I entered the northern capital, with my teeth chattering, and my limbs in a state of perfect insensibility.

My vehicle stopped, at last, at a hotel to which I had been directed. It was a circumstance, I believe, peculiar to Petersburgh, that, at the time I speak of, none of its streets had a name; and if one wanted to find out a house, one was forced to do so by oral description. A pleasant thing it was, too, to stop in the middle of a street, to listen to such description at full length, and find oneself rapidly becoming ice as the detail progressed. After I was lodged, thawed, and fed, I fell fast asleep, and slept for eighteen hours, without waking once; to my mind, it was a miracle that I ever woke again.

I then dressed myself, and, taking my interpreter, who was a Livonian, a great rascal, but clever, who washed twice a week, and did not wear a beard above eight inches long, I put myself into my carriage, and went to deliver my letters of introduction. I had one in particular to the Admiral Apraxin; and it was with him that I was directed to confer, previous to seeking an interview with the Emperor. Accordingly I repaired to his hotel, which was situated on a sort of quay, and was really, for Petersburgh, very magnificent. In this quarter, then, or a little later, lived about thirty other officers of the court, General Jagoyinsky, General Cyernichoff, etc.; and, appropriately enough, the most remarkable public building in the vicinity, is the great slaughter-house—a fine specimen that of practical satire !

On endeavoring to pass through the Admiral's hall, I had the mortification of finding myself rejected by his domestics. As two men in military attire were instantly admitted, I thought this a little hard upon a man who had travelled so far to see his admiralship, and, accordingly, hinted my indignation to Mr. Muscotofsky, my interpreter.

"You are not so richly dressed as those gentlemen," said he.

"That is the reason, is it ?"

"If it so please St. Nicholas, it is; and, besides, those gentlemen have two men running before them, to cry 'Clear the way !'"

"I had better, then, dress myself better, and take two *avant couriers.*"

"If it so please St. Nicholas."

Upon this I returned, robed myself in scarlet and gold, took a couple of lackeys, returned to Admiral Apraxin's, and was admitted in an instant. Who would have thought these savages so like us ? Appearances, you see, produce realities all over the world !

The admiral, who was a very great man at court—though he narrowly escaped Siberia, or the knout, some time after—was civil enough to me: but I soon saw that, favorite as he was with the Czar, that great man left but petty moves in the grand chess-board of politics to be played by any but himself: and my proper plan in this court appeared evidently to be unlike that pursued in most others, where it is better to win the favorite than the prince. Accordingly, I lost no time in seeking an interview with the Czar himself, and readily obtained an appointment to that effect.

On the day before the interview took place, I amused myself with walking over the city, gazing upon its growing grandeur, and casting, in especial, a wistful eye upon the fortress or citadel, which is situated in an island, surrounded by the city; and upon the building of which more than one hundred thousand men are supposed to have perished. So great a sacrifice does it require to conquer nature.

While I was thus amusing myself, I observed a man in a small chaise with one horse pass me twice, and look at me very earnestly. Like most of my countrymen, I do not love to be stared at: however, I thought it better in that unknown country to change my intended frown for a good-natured expression of countenance, and turned away. A singular sight now struck my attention, a couple of men with beards that would have hidden a cassowary, were walking slowly along in their curious long garments, and certainly (I say it reverently), disgracing the semblance of humanity, when, just as they came by a gate, two other men of astonishing height, started forth, each armed with a pair of shears. Before a second was over, off went the beards of the first two passengers; and before another second expired, off went the skirts

of their garments too—I never saw excrescences so expeditiously lopped. The two operators, who preserved a profound silence during this brief affair, then retired a little, and the mutilated wanderers pursued their way with an air of extreme discomfiture.

"Nothing like travel, certainly!" said I unconsciously aloud.

"True!" said a voice in English behind me, I turned, and saw the man who had noticed me so earnestly in the one horse chaise. He was a tall, robust man, dressed very plainly, and even shabbily, in a green uniform, with a narrow tarnished gold lace; and I judged him to be a foreigner, like myself, though his accent and pronunciation evidently showed that he was not a native of the country in the language of which he accosted me.

"It is very true," said he again; "there is nothing like travel!"

"And travel," I rejoined, courteously, "in those places where travel seldom extends. I have only been six days at Petersburgh, and, till I came hither, I knew nothing of the variety of human nature or the power of human genius. But will you allow me to ask the meaning of the very singular occurrence we have just witnessed?"

"Oh, nothing," rejoined the man, with a broad strong smile, "nothing but an attempt to make men out of brutes. This custom of shaving is not, thank Heaven, much wanted now—some years ago it was requisite to have several stations for barbers and tailors to perform their duties in. Now this is very seldom necessary: those gentlemen were especially marked out for the operation. By —— (and here the man swore a hearty English and somewhat sea-faring oath, which a little astonished me in the streets of Petersburgh), I wish it were as easy to lop off all old customs! that it were as easy to clip the *beard of the mind*, sir! Ha—ha!"

"But the Czar must have found a little difficulty in effecting even this outward amendment, and to say truth, I see so many beards about still that I think the reform has been more partial than universal."

"Ah, those are the beards of the common people, the Czar leaves those for the present. Have you seen the docks yet?"

"No: I am not sufficiently a sailor to take much interest in them."

"Humph! humph! you are a soldier, perhaps?"

"I hope to be so one day or other—I am not yet!"

"Not yet! humph! there are opportunities in plenty for those who wish it—what is your profession then, and what do you know best?"

I was certainly not charmed with the honest inquisitiveness of the stranger. "Sir," said I, "sir, my profession is to answer no qustions; and what I know best is—to hold my tongue!"

The stranger laughed out. "Well, well, that is what all Englishmen know best!" said he; "but don't be offended—if you will come home with me I will give you a glass of brandy!"

"I am very much obliged for the offer, but business obliges me to decline it—good morning, sir."

"Good morning!" answered the man, slightly moving his hat, in answer to my salutation.

We separated, as I thought, but I was mistaken. As ill-luck would have it, I lost my way in endeavoring to return home. While I was interrogating a French artisan, who seemed in a prodigious hurry, up comes my inquisitive friend in green again. "Ha! you have lost your way—I can put you into it better than any man in Petersburgh!"

I thought it right to accept the offer; and we moved on, side by side. I now looked pretty attentively at my gentleman. I have said that he was tall and stout—he was also remarkably well-built, and had a kind of seaman's ease and freedom of gait and manner. His countenance was very peculiar; short, firm, and strongly marked; a small, but thick mustachio, covered his upper lip—the rest of his face was shaved. His mouth was wide, but closed, when silent, with that expression of iron resolution which no feature *but* the mouth can convey. His eyes were large, well-opened, and rather stern; and when, which was often in the course of conversation, he pushed back his hat from his forehead, the motion developed two strong deep wrinkles between the eye-brows, which might be indicative either of thought or of irascibility—perhaps of both. He spoke quick, and with a little occasional embarrassment of voice, which, however, never communicated itself to his manner. He seemed, indeed, to have a perfect acquaintance with the

mazes of the growing city; and, every now and then, stopped to say when such a house was built—whither such a street was to lead, etc. As each of these details betrayed some great triumph over natural obstacles, and sometimes over national prejudice, I could not help dropping a few enthusiastic expressions in praise of the genius of the Czar. The man's eyes sparkled as he heard them.

"It is easy to see," said I, "that you sympathize with me, and that the admiration of this great man is not confined to Englishmen. How little in comparison seem all other monarchs: they ruin kingdoms—the Czar creates one. The whole history of the world does not afford an instance of triumphs so vast—so important—so glorious as his have been. How his subjects should adore him!"

"No," said the stranger, with an altered and thoughtful manner, "it is not his subjects, but *their posterity*, that will appreciate his motives, and forgive him for wishing Russia to be an empire of MEN. The present generation may sometimes be laughed, sometimes forced, out of their more barbarous habits and brute-like customs, but they cannot be reasoned out of them; and they don't love the man who attempts to do it. Why, sir, I question whether Ivan IV., who used to butcher the dogs between prayers for an occupation, and between meals for an appetite, I question whether his memory is not to the full as much loved as the living Czar. I know, at least, that whenever the latter attempts a reform, the good Muscovites shrug up their shoulders, and mutter, 'We did not do these things in the good old days of Ivan IV.'"

"Ah! the people of all nations are wonderfully attached to their ancient customs; and it is not unfrequently that the most stubborn enemies to living men are their own ancestors."

"Ha, ha!—true—good!" cried the stranger; and then, after a short pause, he said in a tone of deep feeling which had not hitherto seemed at all a part of his character. "We should do that which is good to the human race, from some principle within, and should not therefore abate our efforts for the opposition, the rancor, or the ingratitude that we experience without. It will be enough reward for Peter I., if hereafter, when (in that circulation of knowledge throughout the world which I can compare to nothing better than the circulation of the blood in the human body) the glory of Russia shall rest, not upon the extent of her dominions, but that of her civilization—not upon the number of inhabitants, embruted and besotted, but the number of enlightened, prosperous, and free men; it will be enough for him, if he be considered to have laid the first stone of that great change—if his labors be fairly weighed against the obstacles which opposed them—if, for his honest and unceasing endeavor to improve millions, he be not too severely judged for offences in a more limited circle—and if, in consideration of having fought the great battle against custom, circumstances, and opposing nature, he be sometimes forgiven for not having invariably conquered himself."

As the stranger broke off abruptly, I could not but feel a little impressed by his words and the energy with which they were spoken. We were now in sight of my lodging. I asked my guide to enter it; but the change in our conversation seemed to have unfitted him a little for my companionship.

"No," said he, "I have business now: we shall meet again; what's your name?"

"Certainly," thought I, "no man ever scrupled so little to ask plain questions:" however, I answered him truly and freely.

"Devereux!" said he, as if surprised: "Ha!—well—we shall meet again. Good day."

CHAPTER III.

The Czar—the Czarina—a Feast at a Russian Nobleman's.

THE next day I dressed myself in my richest attire; and, according to my appointment, went with as much state as I could command to the Czar's palace (if an exceedingly humble abode can deserve so proud an appellation). Although my mission was private, I was a little surprised by the extreme simplicity and absence from pomp which the royal residence presented. I was ushered for a few moments into a paltry anti-chamber, in which were several models of ships, cannon, and houses; two or three indifferent portraits—one of King William III., another of Lord Caermarthen. I was then at once admitted into the royal presence.

There were only two persons in the room—one a female, the other a man; no officers, no

courtiers, no attendants, none of the insignia nor the witnesses of majesty. The female was Catherine, the Czarina; the man was the stranger I had met the day before—and Peter the Great. I was a little startled at the identity of the Czar with my inquisitive acquaintance. However, I put on as assured a countenance as I could. Indeed, I had spoken sufficiently well of the royal person to fell very little apprehension at having unconsciously paid so slight a respect to the royal dignity.

"Ho—ho!" cried the Czar, as I reverently approached him; "I told you we should meet soon!" and, turning round, he presented me to her majesty. That extraordinary woman received me very graciously; and, though I had been a spectator of the most artificial and magnificent court in Europe, I must confess that I could detect nothing in the Czarina's air calculated to betray her having been the servant of a Lutheran minister and the wife of a Swedish dragoon. Whether it was that greatness was natural to her, or whether (which was more probable) she was an instance of the truth of Suckling's hackneyed thought, in Brennoralt—"Success is a rare paint—hides all the ugliness."

While I was making my salutations, the Czarina rose very quietly, and presently, to my no small astonishment, brought me with her own hand, a tolerably large glass of raw brandy. There is nothing in the world I hate so much as brandy; however, I swallowed the potation as if it had been nectar, and made some fine speech about it, which the good Czarina did not seem perfectly to understand. I then, after a few preliminary observations, entered upon my main business with the Czar. Her Majesty sat at a little distance, but evidently listened very attentively to the conversation. I could not but be struck with the singularly bold and strong sense of my royal host. There was no hope of deluding or misleading him by diplomatic subterfuge. The only way by which that wonderful man was ever mislead was through his passions. His reason conquered all errors but those of temperament. I turned the conversation as artfully as I could upon Sweden and Charles XII. "Hatred to one power," thought I, "may produce love to another; and if it does, the child will spring from a very vigorous parent." While I was on this subject, I observed a most fearful convulsion come over the face of the Czar—one so fearful that I involuntarily looked away. Fortunate was it that I did so. Nothing ever enraged him more than being observed in those constitutional contortions of countenance to which from his youth he had been subjected.

After I had conversed with the Czar as long as I thought decorum permitted, I rose to depart. He dismissed me very complaisantly. I re-entered my fine equipage, and took the best of my way home.

Two or three days afterwards, the Czar ordered me to be invited to a grand dinner at Apraxin's. I went there, and soon found myself in conversation with a droll little man, a Dutch minister, and a great favorite with the Czar. The admiral and his wife, before we sat down to eat, handed round to each of their company a glass of brandy on a plate.

"What an odious custom!" whispered the little Dutch minister, smacking his lips, however, with an air of tolerable content.

"Why," said I, prudently, "all countries have their customs. Some centuries ago, a French traveller thought it horrible in us Englishmen to eat raw oysters. But the English were in the right to eat oysters; and perhaps by and by, so much does civilization increase, we shall think the Russians in the right to drink brandy. But really (we had now sat down to the entertainment), I am agreeably surprised here. All the guests are dressed like my own countrymen; a great decorum reigns around. If it were a little less cold, I might fancy myself in London or in Paris."

"Wait," quoth the little Dutchman, with his mouth full of jelly broth—"wait till you hear them talk. What think you, now, that lady next to me is saying?"

"I cannot guess—but she has the prettiest smile in the world; and there is something at once so kind and so respectful in her manner that I should say she was either asking some great favor, or returning thanks for one."

"Right," cried the little minister, "I will interpret for you. She is saying to that old gentleman—'Sir, I am extremely grateful—(and may St. Nicholas bless you for it)—for your very great kindness in having, the day before yesterday, at your sumptuous entertainment, made me so deliciously—drunk!'"

"You are witty, Monsieur," said I, smiling. "*Se non è vero è ben trovato.*"

"By my soul, it is true," cried the Dutchman; "but, hush!—see, they are going to cut up that great pie."

I turned my eyes to the centre of the table, which was ornamented with a huge pasty. Presently it was cut open, and out—walked a hideous little dwarf.

"Are they going to eat him?" said I.

"Ha—ha!" laughed the Dutchman. "No! this is a fashion of the Czar's, which the admiral thinks it good policy to follow. See, it tickles the hebete Russians. They are quite merry on it."

"To be sure," said I; "practical jokes are the only witticisms savages understand."

"Ay, and if it were not for such jokes now and then, the Czar would be odious beyond measure; but dwarf pies and mock processions make his subjects almost forgive him for having shortened their clothes and clipped their beards."

"The Czar is very fond of those mock processions?"

"Fond!" and the little man sunk his voice into a whisper: "he is the sublimest buffoon that ever existed. I will tell you an instance: (do you like these Hungary wines, by the by?) On the 9th of last June, the Czar carried me, and half-a-dozen more of the foreign ministers, to his pleasure-house (Peterhoff). Dinner, as usual, all drunk with tokay, and finished by a quart of brandy each, from her Majesty's own hand. Carried off to sleep,—some in the garden—some in the wood.—Woke at four, still in the clouds. Carried back to the pleasure-house, found the Czar there, made us a low bow, and gave us a hatchet apiece, with orders to follow him. Off we trudged, rolling about like ships in the Zuyder Zee, entered a wood, and were immediately set to work at cutting a road through it. Nice work for us of the *corps diplomatique!* And, by my soul, sir, you see that I am by no means a thin man! We had three hours of it—were carried back—made drunk again—sent to bed—roused again in an hour—made drunk a third time; and, because we *could not* be waked again, left in peace till eight the next morning. Invited to court to breakfast—such head-aches we had—longed for coffee—found nothing but brandy—forced to drink—sick as dogs—sent to take an airing upon the most damnable little horses—not worth a guilder—no bridles nor saddles—bump—bump—bump we go—up and down before the Czar's window—he and the Czarina looking at us. I do assure you I lost two stone by that ride—two stone, sir!—taken to dinner—drunk again, by the Lord—all bundled on board a *torrenschute*—devil of a storm came on—Czar took the rudder—Czarina on high benches in the cabin, which was full of water—waves beating—winds blowing—certain of being drowned—charming prospect!—tossed about for seven hours—driven into the Port of Cronsflot. Czar leaves us, saying, 'Too much of a jest, eh, gentlemen!' All got ashore wet as dog-fishes, made a fire, stripped stark naked, (a Dutch ambassador stark naked—think of it, sir!) crept into some covers of sledges, and rose next morning with the ague—positive fact, sir. Had the ague for two months. Saw the Czar in August—'A charming excursion to my pleasure-house,' said his majesty—'we must make another party there soon.'"

As the Dutchman delivered himself of this little history he was by no means forgetful of the Hungary wines; and as Bacchus and Venus have old affinity, he now began to grow eloquent on the women.

"What think you of them yourself?" said he, "they have a rolling look, eh!"

"They have so," I answered, "but they all have black teeth—what's the reason?"

"They think it a beauty, and say white teeth are the sign of a black-a-moor."

Here the Dutchman was accosted by some one else, and there was a pause. Dinner at last ceased, the guests did not sit long after dinner, and for a very good reason: the brandy bowl is a great enforcer of a prostrate position! I had the satisfaction of seeing the company safely under the table. The Dutchman went first, and, having dexterously manœuvred an escape from utter oblivion for myself, I managed to find my way home, more edified than delighted by the character of a Russian entertainment.

CHAPTER IV.

Conversations with the Czar—if Cromwell was the greatest man (Cæsar excepted) who ever *rose* to the Supreme Power, Peter was the greatest man ever *born* to it.

It was singular enough that my introduction to the notice of Peter the Great, and Philip the Debonnair, should have taken place under circumstances so far similar that both those illustrious personages were playing the part rather of subjects than of princes. I cannot, however, conceive a greater mark of the contrast between their characters than the different motives and manners of the incognitos severally assumed.

Philip, in a scene of low riot and debauch, hiding the Jupiter under the Silenus—wearing the mask only for the licentiousness it veiled, and foregoing the prerogative of power, solely for indulgence in the grossest immunities of vice.

Peter, on the contrary, parting with the selfishness of state, in order to watch the more keenly over the interests of his people—only omitting to preside in order to examine—and affecting the subject only to learn the better the duties of the prince. Had I leisure, I might here pause to point out a notable contrast, not between the Czar and the Regent, but between Peter the Great and *Louis le Grand;* both creators of a new era,—both associated with a vast change in the condition of two mighty empires. There ceases the likeness, and begins the contrast; the blunt simplicity of Peter, the gorgeous magnificence of Louis; the sternness of a legislator for barbarians, the clemency of an idol of courtiers. One the victorious defender of his country—a victory solid, durable, and just; the other the conquering devastator of a neighboring people—a victory, glittering, evanescent, and dishonorable. The one, in peace, rejecting parade, pomp, individual honors, and transforming a wilderness into an empire: the other involved in ceremony, and throned on pomp: and exhausting the produce of millions to pamper the bloated vanity of an individual. The one a fire that burns, without enlightening beyond a most narrow circle, and whose lustre is tracked by what it ruins, and fed by what it consumes: the other a luminary, whose light, not so dazzling in its rays, spreads over a world, and is noted, not for what it destroys, but for what it vivifies and creates.

I cannot say that it was much to my credit that, while I thought the Regent's condescension towards me natural enough, I was a little surprised by the favor shown me by the Czar. At Paris, I had *seemed* to be the man of pleasure; that alone was enough to charm Philip of Orleans. But in Russia, what could I seem in any way calculated to charm the Czar? I could neither make ships, nor could sail them when they were made; I neither knew, nor, what was worse, cared to know, the stern from the rudder. Mechanics were a mystery to me: road-making was an incomprehensible science. Brandy I could not endure—a blunt bearing, and familiar manner, I could not assume. What was it then that made the Czar call upon me, at least twice a week in private, shut himself up with me by the hour together, and endeavor to make me drunk with tokay, in order (as he very incautiously let out one night), "to learn the secrets of my heart?" I thought, at first, that the nature of my mission was enough to solve the riddle: but we talked so little about it, that, with all my diplomatic vanities fresh about me, I could not help feeling I owed the honor I received less to my qualities as minister, than to those as an individual.

At last, however, I found that the secret attraction was what the Czar termed the philosophical channel into which our conferences flowed. I never saw a man so partial to moral problems and metaphysical inquiries, especially to those connected with what ought to be the beginning or the end of all moral sciences—politics. Sometimes we would wander out in disguise, and select some object from the customs, or things around us, as the theme of reflection and discussion; nor in these moments would the Czar ever allow me to yield to his rank what I might not feel disposed to concede to his arguments. One day, I remember that he arrested me in the streets, and made me accompany him to look upon two men undergoing the fearful punishment of the battaog;* one was a German, the other a Russian; the former shrieked violently—struggled in the hands of his punishers—and, with the utmost

* A terrible kind of flogging, but less severe than the knout.

difficulty, was subjected to his penalty; the latter bore it patiently, and in silence; he only spoke once, and it was to say, "God bless the Czar!"

"Can your majesty hear the man," said I, warmly, when the Czar interpreted these words to me, "and not pardon him?"

Peter frowned, but I was not silenced. "You don't know the Russian!" said he, sharply, and turned aside. The punishment was now over. "Ask the German," said the Czar to an officer, "what was his offence?" The German, who was writhing and howling horribly, uttered some violent words against the disgrace of the punishment, and the pettiness of his fault; what the fault was I forget.

"Now ask the Russian," said Peter. "My punishment was just!" said the Russian, coolly, putting on his clothes as if nothing had happened; "God and the Czar were angry with me!"

"Come away, Count," said the Czar; "and now solve me a problem. I know both those men; and the German, in a battle, would be the braver of the two. How comes it that he weeps and writhes like a girl, while the Russian bears the same pain without a murmur?"

"Will your majesty forgive me," said I, "but I cannot help wishing that the Russian had complained more bitterly; insensibility to punishment is the sign of a brute, not a hero. Do you not see that the German felt the indignity, the Russian did not; and do you not see that that very pride, which betrays agony under the disgrace of the battaog, is exactly the very feeling that would have produced courage in the glory of the battle. A sense of honor makes better soldiers and better men than indifference to pain."

"But had I ordered the Russian to death, he would have gone with the same apathy, and the same speech, 'It is just! I have offended God and the Czar!'"

"Dare I observe, Sire, that that fact would be a strong proof of the dangerous falsity of the old maxims which extol indifference to death as a virtue. In some individuals it may be a sign of virtue; I allow; but, as a *national* trait, it is the strongest sign of national misery. Look round the great globe. What countries are those where the inhabitants bear death with cheerfulness, or, at least, with apathy? Are they the most civilized—the most free—the most prosperous? Pardon me—no! They are the half-starved, half-clothed, half-human, sons of the forest and the waste; or, when gathered in states, they are slaves without enjoyment or sense beyond the hour: and the reason that they do not recoil from the pangs of death is because they have never known the real pleasures or the true objects of life."

"Yet," said the Czar, musingly, "the contempt of death was the great characteristic of the Spartans."

"And, therefore," said I, "the great token that the Spartans were a miserable horde. Your majesty admires England and the English; you have, beyond doubt, witnessed an execution in that country; you have noted, even where the criminal is consoled by religion, how he trembles, and shrinks—how dejected—how prostrate of heart he is before the doom is completed. Take now the vilest slave, either of the Emperor of Morocco, or the great Czar of Russia. He changes neither tint nor muscle: he requires no consolation: he shrinks from no torture. What is the inference? *That slaves dread death less than the free.* And it should be so. The end of legislation is not to make *death*, but *life*, a blessing."

"You have put the matter in a new light," said the Czar; "but you allow that, in individuals, contempt of death is sometimes a virtue."

"Yes, when it springs from mental reasonings, not physical indifference. But your majesty has already put in action one vast spring of a system, which will ultimately open to your subjects so many paths of existence that they will preserve contempt for its proper objects, and not lavish it solely, as they do now, on the degradation which sullies life, and the axe that ends it. You have already begun the conquest of another and a most vital error in the philosophy of the ancients; that philosophy taught that man should have few wants, and made it a crime to increase, and a virtue to reduce, them. A legislator should teach, on the contrary, that man should have many wants: for wants are not only the sources of enjoyment—they are the sources of improvement; and that nation will be the most enlightened among whose populace they are found the most numerous. You, Sire, by circulating the arts, the graces, create a vast herd of moral wants hitherto unknown, and in those wants will hereafter be found, the prosperity of your people,

the fountain of your resources, and the strength of your empire."

In conversation on these topics we often passed hours together, and from such conferences the Czar passed only to those on other topics more immediately useful to him. No man, perhaps, had a larger share of the mere human frailties than Peter the Great; yet I do confess that when I saw the nobleness of mind with which he flung aside his rank as a robe, and repaired from man to man, the humblest or the highest, the artisan or the prince,—the prosperity of his subjects his only object, and the acquisition of knowledge his only means to obtain it,—I do confess that my mental sight refused even to perceive his frailties, and that I could almost have bent the knee in worship to a being whose benevolence was so pervading a spirit, and whose power was so glorious a minister to utility.

Towards the end of January, I completed my mission, and took my leave of the court of Russia.

"Tell the Regent," said Peter, "that I shall visit him in France soon, and shall expect to see his drawings, if I show him my models."

In effect, the next month (February 16), the Czar commenced his second course of travels. He was pleased to testify some regard for me on my departure. "If ever you quit the service of the French court, and your own does not require you, I implore you to come to me; I will give you *carte blanche* as to the nature and appointments of your office."

I need not say that I expressed my gratitude for the royal condescension; nor that, in leaving Russia, I brought, from the example of its sovereign, a greater desire to be useful to mankind than I had known before. Pattern and Teacher of kings, if each country, in each century, had produced one such ruler as you, either all mankind would *now* be contented with despotism, or all mankind would be *free!* Oh! when kings have only to be good, to be kept for ever in our hearts and souls as the gods and benefactors of the earth, by what monstrous fatality have they been so blind to their fame? When we remember the millions, the generations, they can degrade, destroy, elevate or save, we might almost think (even if the other riddles of the present existence did not require a future existence to solve them), we might almost think a hereafter *necessary*, were it but for the sole purpose of requiting the virtues of princes,—or their SINS! *

CHAPTER V.

Return to Paris—Interview with Bolingbroke—A gallant Adventure—Affair with Dubois—Public Life is a Drama, in which private Vices generally play the part of the scene-shifters.

IT is a strange feeling we experience on entering a great city by night—a strange mixture of social and solitary impressions. I say by night, because at that time we are most inclined to feel; and the mind, less distracted than in the day by external objects, dwells the more intensely upon its own hopes and thoughts, remembrances and associations — and sheds over them, from that one feeling which it cherishes the most, a blending and a mellowing hue.

It was at night that I re-entered Paris. I did not tarry long at my hotel, before (though it was near upon midnight) I conveyed myself to Lord Bolingbroke's lodgings. Knowing his engagements at St. Germains, where the chevalier (who had but a very few weeks before returned to France, after the crude and unfortunate affair of 1715) chiefly resided, I was not very sanguine in my hopes of finding him at Paris. I was, however, agreeably surprised. His servant would have ushered me into his study, but I was willing to introduce myself. I withheld the servent, and entered the room alone.

The door was ajar, and Bolingbroke neither heard nor saw me. There was something in his attitude and aspect which made me pause to survey him, before I made myself known. He was sitting by a table covered with books. A large folio (it was the Cassubon edition of Polybius) was lying open before him. I recognized the work at once—it was a favorite book with Bolingbroke, and we had often discussed the merits of its author. I smiled as I saw

* Upon his death-bed Peter is reported to have said, "God, I dare trust, will look mercifully upon my faults, in consideration of the good I have done my country." These are worthy to be the last words of a king! Rarely has there been a monarch who more required the forgiveness of the Creator;—yet seldom perhaps has there been a human being who more deserved it.—ED.

that that book, which has to statesmen so peculiar an attraction, made still the study from which the busy, restless, ardent, and exalted spirit of the statesman before me drew its intellectual food. But at the moment in which I entered, his eye was absent from the page, and turned abstractedly in an opposite, though still downcast, direction. His countenance was extremely pale—his lips were tightly compressed, and an air of deep thought, mingled, as it seemed to me, with sadness—made the ruling expression of his lordly and noble features. "It is the torpor of ambition after one of its storms," said I, inly—and I approached, and laid my hand on his shoulder.

After our mutual greetings, I said, "Have the dead so strong an attraction that at this hour they detain the courted and courtly Bolingbroke from the admiration and converse of the living?"

The statesman looked at me earnestly—"Have you heard the news of the day?" said he.

"How is it possible? I have but just arrived at Paris."

"You do not know, then, that I have resigned my office under the Chevalier!"

"Resigned your office!"

"Resigned is a wrong word—I received a dismissal. Immediately on his return the Chevalier sent for me—embraced me—desired me to prepare to follow him to Lorraine; and three days afterwards came the Duke of Ormond to me, to ask me to deliver up the seals and papers. I put the latter very carefully in a little letter case, and behold an end to the administration of Lord Bolingbroke! The Jacobites abuse me terribly—their king accuses me of neglect, incapacity, and treachery—and Fortune pulls down the fabric she had built for me, in order to pelt me with the stones!" *

"My dear, dear friend, I am indeed grieved for you; but I am more incensed at the infatuation of the Chevalier. Surely, surely he must already have seen his error, and solicited your return."

"Return!" cried Bolingbroke, and his eyes flashed fire—"return!—Hear what I said to the queen mother who came to me to attempt a reconciliation: 'Madam,' said I, in a tone as calm as I could command, 'if ever this hand draws the sword or employs the pen, in behalf of that prince, may it rot!' Return! not if my head were the price of refusal! Yet, Devereux,"—and here Bolingbroke's voice and manner changed—"yet it is not at these tricks of fate that a wise man will repine. We do right to cultivate honors; they are sources of gratification to ourselves; they are more—they are incentives to the conduct which works benefit to others; but we do wrong to afflict ourselves at their loss. *Nec querere nec spernere honores oportet.** It is good to enjoy the blessings of fortune; it is better to submit without a pang to their loss. You remember, when you left me, I was preparing myself for this stroke—believe me, I am now prepared."

And in truth Bolingbroke bore the ingratitude of the Chevalier well. Soon afterwards he carried his long cherished wishes for retirement into effect; and Fate, who delights in reversing her disk, leaving in darkness what she had just illumined, and illumining what she had hitherto left in obscurity and gloom, for a long interval separated us from each other, no less by his seclusion than by the publicity to which she condemned myself.

Lord Bolingbroke's dismissal was not the only event affecting me that had occurred during my absence from France. Among the most active partisans of the Chevalier, in the expedition of Lord Mar, had been Montreuil. So great, indeed, had been either his services, or the idea entertained of their value, that a reward of extraordinary amount was offered for his head. Hitherto he had escaped, and was supposed to be still in Scotland.

But what affected me more nearly was the condition of Gerald's circumstances. On the breaking out of the rebellion, he had been suddenly seized, and detained in prison; and it was only upon the escape of the Chevalier that he was released; apparently, however, nothing had been proved against him; and my absence from the head-quarters of intelligence left me in ignorance both of the grounds of his imprisonment, and the circumstances of his release.

I heard, however, from Bolingbroke, who seemed to possess some of that information which the ecclesiastical *intriguants* of the day so curiously transmitted from court to court,

* Letter to Sir W. Windham.—Ed.

* It becomes us neither to court, nor to despise honors.

and corner to corner, that Gerald had retired to Devereux Court in great disgust at his confinement. However, when I considered his bold character, his close intimacy with Montreuil, and the genius for intrigue which that priest so eminently possessed, I was not much inclined to censure the government for unnecessary precaution in his imprisonment.

There was another circumstance connected with the rebellion which possessed for me an individual and deep interest. A man of the name of Barnard had been executed in England for seditious and treasonable practices. I took especial pains to ascertain every particular respecting him. I learned that he was young, of inconsiderable note, but esteemed clever; and had, long previously to the death of the queen, been secretly employed by the friends of the Chevalier. This circumstance occasioned me much internal emotion, though there could be no doubt that the Barnard whom I had such cause to execrate, had only borrowed from this minion the disguise of his name.

The Regent received me with all the graciousness and complaisance for which he was so remarkable. To say the truth, my mission had been extremely fortunate in its results; the only cause in which the Regent was concerned, the interests of which Peter the Great appeared to disregard, was that of the Chevalier; but I had been fully instructed on that head anterior to my legation.

There appears very often to be a sort of moral fitness between the beginning and the end of certain alliances or acquaintances. This sentiment is not very clearly expressed. I am about to illustrate it by an important event in my political life. During my absence Dubois had made rapid steps towards being a great man. He was daily growing into power, and those courtiers who were neither too haughty nor too honest to bend the knee to so vicious, yet able, a minion, had already singled him out as a fit person to flatter and to rise by. For me, I neither sought nor avoided him; but he was as civil towards me as his *brusque* temper permitted him to be towards most persons; and as our careers were not likely to cross one another, I thought I might reckon on his neutrality, if not on his friendship. Chance turned the scale against me.

One day I received an anonymous letter, requesting me to be, at such an hour, at a certain house in the Rue ——. It occurred to me as no improbable supposition, that the appointment might relate to my individual circumstances, whether domestic or political, and I certainly had not at the moment any ideas of gallantry in my brain. At the hour prescribed I appeared at the place of assignation. My mind misgave me when I saw a female conduct me into a little chamber hung with tapestry descriptive of the loves of Mars and Venus. After I had cooled my heels in this apartment for about a quarter of an hour, in sailed a tall woman, of a complexion almost *Moorish*. I bowed—the lady sighed. An *éclaircissement* ensued—and I found that I had the good fortune to be the object of a *caprice*, in the favorite mistress of the Abbé Dubois. Nothing was farther from my wishes! What a pity it is that one cannot always tell a woman one's mind!

I attempted a flourish about friendship, honor, and the respect due to the *amante* of the most intimate *ami* I had in the world.

"Pooh!" said the tawny Calypso, a little pettishly—"pooh! one does not talk of those things here."

"Madame," said I, very energetically, "I implore you to refrain. Do not excite too severe a contest between passion and duty! I feel that I must fly you—you are already too bewitching."

Just as I rose to depart, in rushes the *femme de chambre*, and announces, not Monseiur, the Abbé, but Monseigneur, the Regent. Of course (the old resort in such cases) I was thrust into a closet; in marches his royal highness, and is received very cavalierly. It is quite astonishing to me what airs those women give themselves when they have princes to manage! However, my confinement was not long—the closet had another door—the *femme de chambre* slips round, opens it, and I congratulate myself on my escape.

When a Frenchwoman is piqued, she passes all understanding. The next day I am very quietly employed at breakfast, when my valet ushers in a masked personage, and, behold my gentlewoman again! Human endurance will not go too far, and this was a case which required one to be in a passion one way or the other; so I feigned anger, and talked with exceeding dignity about the predicament I had been placed in the day before.

"Such must always be the case," said I, 'when one is weak enough to form an attachnent to a lady who encourages so many ›thers!"

"For your sake," said the tender dame, 'for your sake, then, I will discard them all!"

There was something grand in this: it might ıave elicited a few strokes of pathos, when—ıever was there anything so strangely provokıg—the Abbe Dubois himself was heard in ıy anti-room. I thought this chance, but it vas more; the good Abbe, I afterwards found, ıad traced cause for suspicion, and had come o pay me a visit of amatory police. I opened ıy dressing-room door, and thrust in the lady. 'There," said I, "are the back-stairs, and at he bottom of the back-stairs is a door."

Would not any one have thought this hint nough? By no means; this very tall lady tooped to the littleness of listening, and, intead of departing, stationed herself by the ey-hole.

I never exactly learned whether Dubois susected the visit his mistress had paid me, or 'hether he merely surmised, from his spies or er escritoire, that she harbored an inclination ›wards me; in either case his policy was atural, and like himself.

He sat himself down—talked of the Regent, f pleasure, of women, and, at last, of this ery tall lady in question.

"*La pauvre diablesse*," said he, contemptusly, "I had once compassion on her; I have epented it ever since. You have no idea what terrible creature she is—has such a wen in er neck—quite a *goître*. *Mort diable!*" (and ıe Abbé spat in his handkerchief.) "I would ›oner have a *liaison* with the witch of Endor!"

Not content with this, he went on in his sual gross and displeasing manner to enumrate or to forge those various particulars of her ersonal charms, which he thought most likely › steel me against her attractions. "Thank Ieaven, at least," thought I, "that she has one!"

Scarcely had this pious gratulation flowed om my heart, before the door was burst open, nd, pale—trembling—eyes on fire—hands lenched—forth stalked the lady in question. . wonderful proof how much sooner a woman ould lose her character than allow it to be alled not worth the losing. She entered, nd had all the furies of Hades lent her their tongues she could not have been more eloquent. It would have been a very pleasant scene if one had not been a partner in it. The old *Abbé*, with his keen, astute marked face, struggling between surprise, fear, the sense of the ridiculous, and the certainty of losing his mistress; the lady, foaming at the mouth, and shaking her clenched hand most menacingly at her traducer—myself endeavoring to pacify, and acting, as one does at such moments, mechanically—though one flatters oneself afterwards that one acted solely from wisdom.

But the Abbe's mistress was by no means content with vindicating herself—she retaliated—and gave so minute a description of the Abbe's own qualities and graces, coupled with so many pleasing illustrations, that in a very little time his coolness forsook him, and he grew in as great a rage as herself. At last she flew out of the room. The Abbe, trembling with passion, shook me most cordially by the hand, grinned from ear to ear, said it was a capital joke, wished me good-bye, as if he loved me better than his eyes, and left the house, my most irreconcilable and bitter foe!

How could it be otherwise? The rivalship the Abbe might have forgiven—such things happened every day to him—but the having been made so egregiously ridiculous, the Abbe could not forgive; and the Abbe's was a critical age for jesting on these matters, sixty or so. And then such unpalatable sarcasms on his appearance! "'Tis all over in that quarter," said I to myself, "but we may find another," and I drove out that very day to pay my respects to the Regent.

What a pity it is that one's pride should so often be the bane of one's wisdom! Ah! that one could be as good a man of the world in practice as one is in theory! my master-stroke of policy at that moment would evidently have been this: I should have gone to the Regent and made out a story a little similar to the real one, but with this difference, all the ridicule of the situation should have fallen upon me, and the little Dubois should have been elevated on a pinnacle of respectable appearances! This, as the Regent told the Abbe everything, would have saved me. I saw the plan; but was too proud to adopt it; I followed another course in my game: I threw away the knave, and played with the king, *i. e.*, with the Regent.

After a little preliminary conversation, I turned the conversation on the Abbe.

"Ah, the *scélérat!*" said Philip, smiling, "'tis a sad dog, but very clever and *loves me;* he would be incomparable, if he were but decently honest."

"At least," said I, "he is no hypocrite, and that is some praise."

"Hem!" ejaculated the Duke, very slowly, and then, after a pause, he said, "Count, I have a real kindness for you, and I will therefore give you a piece of advice: think as well of Dubois as you can, and address him as if he were all you endeavored to fancy him."

After this hint, which in the mouth of any prince but Philip of Orleans would have been not a little remarkable for its want of dignity, my prospects did not seem much brighter: however, I was not discouraged.

"The Abbe," said I, respectfully, "is a choleric man: one *may* displease him; but dare I hope that so long as I preserve inviolate my zeal and my attachment to the interests, and the person of your highness, no—"

The Regent interrupted me. "You mean nobody shall successfully misrepresent you to me? No, Count," (and here the Regent spoke with the earnestness and dignity, which, when he did assume, few wore with a nobler grace) —"no, Count, I make a distinction between those who minister to the state, and those who minister to me. I consider your services too valuable to the former to put them at the mercy of the latter. And now that the conversation has turned upon business, I wish to speak to you about this scheme of *Gortz.*"

After a prolonged conference with the Regent upon matters of business, in which his deep penetration into human nature not a little surprised me, I went away, thoroughly satisfied with my visit. I should not have been so had I added to my other accomplishments the gift of prophecy.

Above five days after this interview, I thought it would be but prudent to pay the Abbe Dubois one of those visits of homage which it was already become policy to pay him. "If I go," thought I, "it will seem as if nothing had happened; if I stay away, it will seem as if I attached importance to a scene I should appear to have forgotten."

It so happened that the Abbe had a very unusual visitor that morning, in the person of the austere but admirable Duc de St. Simon. There was a singular, and almost invariable, distinction in the Regent's mind between one kind of regard and another. His regard for one order of persons always arose either out of his vices or his indolence; his regard for another, out of his good qualities and his strong sense. The Duc de St. Simon held the same place in the latter species of affection that Dubois did in the former. The Duc was just coming out of the Abbé's closet as I entered the anti-room. He paused to speak to me, while Dubois, who had followed the Duc out, stopped for one moment, and surveyed me with a look like a thunder-cloud. I did not appear to notice it, but St. Simon did.

"That look," said he, as Dubois, beckoning to a gentleman to accompany him to his closet, once more disappeared, "that look bodes you no good, Count."

Pride is an elevation which is a spring-board at one time, and a stumbling-block at another. It was with me more often the stumbling-block than the spring-board. "Monsiegneur le Duc," said I, haughtily enough, and rather in too loud a tone considering the chamber was pretty full, "in no court to which Morton Devereux proffers his services shall his fortune depend upon the looks of a low-born insolent, or a profligate priest."

St. Simon smiled sardonically. "Monsieur le Compte," said he, rather civilly, "I honor your sentiments, and I wish you success in the world——and a lower voice."

I was going to say something by way of retort, for I was in a very bad humor, but I checked myself; "I need not," thought I, "make two enemies, if I can help it."

"I shall never," I replied gravely, "I shall never despair, so long as the Duc de St. Simon lives, of winning by the same arts the favor of princes and the esteem of good men."

The Duc was flattered, and replied suitably, but he very soon afterwards went away. I was resolved that I would not go till I had fairly seen what sort of reception the Abbe would give me. I did not wait long—he came out of his closet, and standing in his usual rude manner with his back to the fire-place, received the addresses and compliments of his visitors. I was not in a hurry to present myself, but I did so at last with a familiar, yet rather respectful, air. Dubois looked at me from head to foot,

and abruptly turning his back upon me, said with an oath, to a courtier who stood next to him,—"The plagues of Pharaoh are come again—only instead of Egyptian frogs in our chambers, we have the still more troublesome guests—English adventurers!"

Somehow or other my compliments rarely tell; I am lavish enough of them, but they generally have the air of sarcasm; thank Heaven, however, no one can accuse me of ever wanting a rude answer to a rude speech. "Ha! ha! ha!" said I now, in answer to Dubois, with a courteous laugh, "you have an excellent wit, Abbe. Apropos of adventures, I met a Monsieur St. Laurent, Principal of the Institution of St. Michael, the other day, 'Count,' said he, hearing I was going to Paris, 'you can do me an especial favor!' 'What is it?' said I. 'Why a cast-off valet of mine is living at Paris—he would have gone long since to the galleys, if he had not taken sanctuary in the Church—if ever you meet him give him a good horse-whipping on my account:—his name is William Dubois.'—'Depend upon it,' answered I to Monsieur St. Laurent, 'that if he is servant to any one not belonging to the royal family, I will fulfil your errand, and horsewhip him soundly; if *in* the service of the royal family, why respect for his masters must oblige me to content myself with putting all persons on their guard against a little rascal, who retains, in all situations, the manners of the apothecary's son, and the roguery of the director's valet.'"

All the time I was relating this charming little anecdote, it would have been amusing to the last degree to note the horrified countenances of the surrounding gentlemen. Dubois was too confounded, too aghast, to interrupt me, and I left the room before a single syllable was uttered. Had Dubois at that time been what he was afterwards, cardinal and prime minister, I should in all probability have had permanent lodgings in the Bastile, in return for my story. Even as it was, the Abbe was not so grateful as he ought to have been, for my taking so much pains to amuse him! In spite of my anger on leaving the favorite, I did not forget my prudence, and accordingly I hastened to the prince. When the Regent admitted me, I flung myself on my knee, and told him, verbatim, all that had happened. The Regent, who seems to have had very little real liking for Dubois, could not help laughing when I ludicrously described to him the universal consternation my anecdote had excited.*

"Courage, my dear Count," said he kindly, "you have nothing to fear; return home and count upon an embassy!"

I relied on the royal word, returned to my lodgings, and spent the evening with Chaulieu and Fontenelle. The next day the Duc de St. Simon paid me a visit. After a little preliminary conversation, he unburthened the secret with which he was charged. I was desired to leave Paris in forty-eight hours.

"Believe me," said St. Simon, "that this message was not entrusted to me by the Regent, without great reluctance. He sends you many condescending and kind messages; says he shall always both esteem and like you, and hopes to see you again, some time or other, at the Palais Royal. Moreover, he desires the message to be private, and has entrusted it to me in especial, because hearing that I had a kindness for you, and knowing I had a hatred for Dubois, he thought I should be the least unwelcome messenger of such disagreeable tidings. 'To tell you the truth, St. Simon,' said the Regent laughing, 'I only consent to have him banished, from a firm conviction, that if I do not, Dubois will take some opportunity of having him beheaded.'"

"Pray," said I, smiling with a tolerable good grace, "pray give my most grateful and humble thanks to his highness, for his very considerate and kind foresight. I could not have chosen better for myself than his highness has chosen for me: my only regret on quitting France is at leaving a prince so effable as Philip, and a courtier so virtuous as St. Simon."

Though the good Duc went every year to the Abbey de la Trappe, for the purpose of mortifying his sins and preserving his religion, in so impious an atmosphere as the Palais Royal, he was not above flattery; and he expresssed himself towards me with particular kindness after my speech.

At court, one becomes a sort of human ant-bear, and learns to catch one's prey by one's tongue.

* On the death of Dubois, the Regent wrote to the Count de Nocé, whom he had banished for an indiscreet expression against the favorite, uttered at one of his private suppers: "With the beast dies the venom: I expect you to-night to supper at the Palais Royal."

After we had eased ourselves a little by abusing Dubois, the Duc took his leave in order to allow me time to prepare for my "journey," as he politely called it. Before he left, he however asked me whither my course would be bent? I told him that I should take my chance with the Czar Peter, and see if his czarship thought the same esteem was due to the disgraced courtier, as to the favored diplomatist.

That night I received a letter from St. Simon, enclosing one addressed with all due form to the Czar. "You will consider the enclosed," wrote St. Simon, "a fresh proof of the Regent's kindness to you; it is a most flattering testimonial in your favor, and cannot fail to make the Czar anxious to secure your services."

I was not a little touched by a kindness, so unusual in princes to their discarded courtiers, and this entirely reconciled me to a change of scene which, indeed, under any other circumstances, my somewhat morbid love for action and variety would have induced me rather to relish than dislike.

Within thirty-six hours from the time of dismissal, I had turned my back upon the French capital.

CHAPTER VI.

A long Interval of Years—a change of Mind and its Causes.

The last accounts received of the Czar reported him to be at Dantzic. He had, however, quitted that place when I arrived there. I lost no time in following him, and presented myself to his Majesty one day after his dinner, when he was sitting with one leg in the Czarina's lap, and a bottle of the best *eau de vie* before him. I had chosen my time well; he received me most graciously, read my letter from the Regent—about which, remembering the fate of Bellerophon, I had had certain apprehensions, but which proved to be, in the highest degree, complimentary—and then declared himself extremely happy to see me again. However parisimonious Peter generally was towards foreigners, I never had ground for personal complaint on that score. The very next day I was appointed to a post of honor and profit about the royal person; from this I was transferred to a military station, in which I rose with great rapidity; and I was only occasionally called from my warlike duties, to be entrusted with diplomatic missions of the highest confidence and importance.

It is this portion of my life—a portion of nine years, to the time of the Czar's death—that I shall, in this history, the most concentrate and condense. In truth, were I to dwell upon it at length, I should make little more than a mere record of political events—differing, in some respects, it is true, from the received histories of the time, but containing nothing to compensate in utility for the want of interest. That this was the exact age for adventurers, Alberoni and Dubois are sufficient proofs. Never was there a more stirring, active, restless period—never one in which the genius of intrigue was so pervadingly at work. I was not less fortunate than my brethren. Although scarcely four and twenty when I entered the Czar's service, my habits of intimacy with men much older—my customary gravity, reserve, and thought — my freedom, since Isora's death, from youthful levity or excess —my earty entrance into the world—and a countenance prematurely marked with the lines of reflection, and sobered by its hue—made me appear considerably older than I was. I kept my own counsel, and affected to be so; youth is a great enemy to one's success; and more esteem is often bestowed upon a wrinkled brow than a plodding brain.

All the private intelligence which, during this space of time, I had received from England was far from voluminous. My mother still enjoyed the quiet of her religious retreat. A fire, arising from the negligence of a servant, had consumed nearly the whole of Devereux Court (the fine old house! till *that* went, I thought even England held one friend). Upon this accident, Gerald had gone to London; and, though there was now no doubt of his having been concerned in the Rebellion of 1715, he had been favorably received at court, and was already renowned throughout London, for his pleasures, his excesses, and his munificent profusion.

Montreuil, whose lot seemed to be always to lose, by intrigue, what he gained by the real solidity of his genius, had embarked very largely in the rash but gigantic schemes of Gortz and Alberoni; schemes which, had they succeeded, would not only have placed a new

king upon the English throne, but wrought an utter change over the whole face of Europe. With Alberoni and with Gortx fell Montreuil. He was banished France and Spain; the penalty of death awaited him in Britain; and he was supposed to have thrown himself into some convent in Italy, where his name and his character were unknown. In this brief intelligence was condensed all my information of the actors in my first scenes of life. I return to that scene on which I had now entered.

At the age of thirty-three, I had acquired a reputation sufficient to content my ambition—my fortune was larger than my wants—I was a favorite in courts—I had been successful in camps—I had already obtained all that would have rewarded the whole lives of many men superior to myself in merit—more ardent than myself in desires. I was still young—my appearance, though greatly altered, manhood had rather improved than impaired. I had not forestalled my constitution by excesses, nor worn dry the sources of pleasure by too large a demand upon their capacities; why was it then, at that golden age—in the very prime and glory of manhood—in the very zenith and summer of success—that a deep, dark, pervading melancholy fell upon me? A melancholy so gloomy that it seemed to me as a thick and impenetrable curtain drawn gradually between myself and the blessed light of human enjoyment. A torpor crept upon me—an indolent, heavy, clinging languor, gathered over my whole frame—the physical and the mental: I sat for hours without book, paper, object, thought, gazing on vacancy—stirring not—feeling not—yes, feeling, but feeling only one sensation, a sick, sad, drooping despondency—a sinking in of the heart—a sort of gnawing within, as if something living were twisted round my vitals, and, finding no other food, preyed, though with a sickly and dull maw, upon *them*. This disease came upon me slowly: it was not till the beginning of a second year, from its obvious and palpable commencement, that it grew to the height that I have described. It began with a distaste to all that I had been accustomed to enjoy or to pursue. Music, which I had always passionately loved, though from some defect in the organs of hearing, I was incapable of attaining the smallest knowledge of the science, music lost all its diviner spells, all its properties of creating a new existence, a life of dreaming and vague luxuries, within the mind—it became only a monotonous sound, less grateful to the languor of my faculties than an utter and dead stillness. I had never been what is generally termed a boon companion, but I had had the social vanities, if not the social tastes: I had insensibly loved the board which echoed with applause at my sallies, and the comrades who, while they deprecated my satire, had been complaisant enough to hail it as wit. One of my weaknesses is a love of show, and I had gratified a feeling not the less cherished because it arose from a petty source, in obtaining for my equipages, my mansion, my banquets, the celebrity which is given no less to magnificence than to fame, now I grew indifferent alike to the signs of pomp, and to the baubles of taste—praise fell upon a listless ear, and (rare pitch of satiety!) the pleasures that are the offspring of our foibles delighted me no more.

I had early learned from Bolingbroke a love for the converse of men, eminent, whether for wisdom or for wit; the graceful badinage, or the keen critique — the sparkling flight of the winged words which circled and rebounded from lip to lip, or the deep speculation upon the mysterious and unravelled wonders of man, of nature, and the world—the light maxim upon manners, or the sage inquiry into the mines of learning; all and each had possessed a link to bind my temper and my tastes to the graces and fascination of social life. Now a new spirit entered within me: the smile faded from my lip, and the jest departed from my tongue; memory seemed no less treacherous than fancy, and deserted me the instant I attempted to enter into those contests of knowledge in which I had been not undistinguished before. I grew confused and embarrassed in speech—my words expressed a sense utterly different to that which I had intended to convey, and at last, as my apathy increased, I sat at my own board, silent and lifeless, freezing into ice the very powers and streams of converse which I had once been the foremost to circulate and to warm.

At the time I refer to, I was minister at one of the small continental courts, where life is a round of unmeaning etiquette and wearisome ceremonials, a daily labor of trifles—a ceaseless pageantry of nothings—I had been sent there

upon one important event, the business resulting from it had soon ceased, and all the duties that remained for me to discharge were of a negative and passive nature. Nothing that could arouse—nothing that could occupy faculties that had for years been so perpetually wound up to a restless excitement was left for me in this terrible reservoir of *ennui*. I had come thither at once from the skirmishing and wild warfare of a Tartar foe; a war in which, though the glory was obscure, the action was perpetual and exciting. I had come thither, and the change was as if I had passed from a mountain stream to a stagnant pool.

Society at this court reminded me of a state funeral, everything was pompous and lugubrious, even to the drapery—even to the feathers—which, in other scenes, would have been consecrated to associations of levity or of grace; the hourly pageant swept on slow, tedious, mournful, and the object of the attendants was only to entomb the Pleasure which they affected to celebrate. What a change for the wild, the strange, the novel, the intriguing, the varying life, which, whether in courts or in camps, I had hitherto led. The internal change that came over myself is scarcely to be wondered at; the winds stood still, and the straw they had blown from quarter to quarter, whether in anger or in sport, began to moulder upon the spot where they had left it.

From this cessation of the aims, hopes, and thoughts of life, I was awakened by the spreading, as it were, of another disease—the dead, dull, aching pain at my heart, was succeeded by one acute and intense; the absence of thought gave way to one thought more terrible—more dark—more despairing than any which had haunted me since the first year of Isora's death; and from a numbness and pause, as it were, of existence, existence became too keen and intolerable a sense. I will enter into an explanation.

At the Court of ——, there was an Italian, not uncelebrated for his wisdom, nor unbeloved for an innocence and integrity of life, rarely indeed to be met with among his countrymen. The acquaintance of this man, who was about fifty years of age, and who was devoted, almost exclusively, to the pursuit of philosophical science, I had sedulously cultivated. His conversation pleased me; his wisdom improved; and his benevolence, which reminded me of the traits of La Fontaine, it was so infantine, made me incline to love him.

Upon the growth of the fearful malady of mind which seized me, I had discontinued my visits and my invitations to the Italian; and Bezoni (so was he called) felt a little offended by my neglect. As soon, however, as he discovered my state of mind, the good man's resentment left him. He forced himself upon my solitude, and would sit by me whole evenings—sometimes without exchanging a word—sometimes with vain attempts to interest, to arouse, or to amuse me.

At last, one evening, it was the era of a fearful suffering to me, our conversation turned upon those subjects which are at once the most important, and the most rarely discussed. We spoke of *religion*. We first talked upon the theology of revealed religion. As Bezoni warmed into candor, I perceived that his doctrines differed from my own, and that he inly disbelieved that divine creed which Christians profess to adore. From a dispute on the ground of faith, we came to one upon the more debateable ground of reason.

We turned from the subject of revealed, to that of natural, religion; and we entered long and earnestly into that grandest of all earthly speculations—the metaphysical proofs of the immortality of the soul. Again the sentiments of Bezoni were opposed to mine. He was a believer in the dark doctrine which teaches that man is dust, and that all things are forgotten in the grave. He expressed his opinions with a clearness and precision the more impressive because totally devoid of cavil and of rhetoric. I listened in silence, but with a deep and most chilling dismay. Even now I think I see the man as he sat before me, the light of the lamp falling on his high forehead and dark features; even now I think I hear his calm, low voice—the silver voice of his country—stealing to my heart, and withering the only pure and unsullied hope which I yet cherished there.

Bezoni left me, unconscious of the anguish he bequeathed me, to think over all he had said. I did not sleep, nor even retire to bed. I laid my head upon my hands, and surrendered myself to turbulent, yet intense, reflection. Every man who has lived much in the world, and conversed with its various tribes, has, I fear, met with many who, on this momentous subject, profess the same tenets as

Bezoni. But he was the first person I had met of that sect who had evidently thought long and deeply upon the creed he had embraced. He was not a voluptuary, nor a boaster, nor a wit. He had not been misled by the delusions either of vanity or of the senses. He was a man, pure, innocent, modest, full of all tender charities, and meek dispositions towards mankind; it was evidently his interest to believe in a future state: he could have had nothing to fear from it. Not a single passion did he cherish which the laws of another world would have condemned. Add to this, what I have observed before, that he was not a man fond of the display of intellect, nor one that brought to the discussions of wisdom the artillery of wit. He was grave, humble, and self-diffident, beyond all beings. I would have given a kingdom to have found something in the advocate by which I could have condemned the cause: I could not, and I was wretched.

I spent the whole of the next week among my books. I ransacked whatever in my scanty library the theologians had written, or the philosophers had bequeathed upon that mighty secret. I arranged their arguments in my mind. I armed myself with their weapons. I felt my heart spring joyously within me as I felt the strength I had acquired, and I sent to the philosopher to visit me, that I might conquer and confute him. He came: but he spoke with pain and reluctance. He saw that I had taken the matter far more deeply to heart than he could have supposed it possible in a courtier, and a man of fortune and the world. Little did he know of me or my secret soul. I broke down his reserve at last. I unrolled my arguments. I answered his, and we spent the whole night in controversy. He left me, and I was more bewildered than ever.

To speak truth, he had devoted years to the subject: I had devoted only a week. He had come to his conclusions step by step; he had reached the great ultimatum with slowness, with care, and, he confessed, with anguish and with reluctance. What a match was I, who brought a hasty temper, and a limited reflection, on that subject, to a reasoner like this? His candor staggered and chilled me even more than his logic. Arguments that occurred not to me, upon my side of the question, *he* stated at length, and with force; I heard, and, till he replied to them, I deemed they were unanswerable—the reply came, and I had no counterword. A meeting of this nature was often repeated; and when he left me, tears crept into my wild eyes, my heart melted within me, and I wept!

I must now enter more precisely than I have yet done into my state of mind upon religious matters at the time this dispute with the Italian occurred. To speak candidly, I had been far less shocked with his opposition to me upon matters of doctrinal faith, than with that upon matters of abstract reasoning. Bred a Roman Catholic, though pride, consistency, custom, made me externally adhere to the Papal Church, I inly perceived its errors, and smiled at its superstitions. And in the busy world, where so little but present objects, or *human* anticipations of the future, engross the attention, I had never given the subject that consideration which would have enabled me (as it has since) to separate the dogmas of the priest from the precepts of the Saviour, and thus confirmed my belief as the Christian, by the very means which would have loosened it as the Sectarian. So, that at the time Bezoni knew me, a certain indifference to—perhaps arising from an ignorance of—doctrinal points, rendered me little hurt by arguments against opinions which I embraced indeed, but with a lukewarm and imperfect affection. But it was far otherwise upon abstract points of reasoning, far otherwise, when the hope of surviving this frail and most unhallowed being was to be destroyed. I might have been indifferent to cavil upon *what* was the word of God, but never to question of the justice of God himself. In the whole world, there was not a more ardent believer in our imperishable nature, nor one more deeply interested in the belief. Do not let it be supposed that because I have not often recurred to Isora's death (or because I have continued my history in a jesting and light tone), that that event ever passed from the memory which it had turned to bitterness and gall. Never, in the mazes of intrigue, in the festivals of pleasure, in the tumults of ambition, in the blaze of a licentious court, or by the rude tents of a barbarous host,—never, my buried love, had I forgotten thee! That remembrance, had no other cause existed, would have led me to God. Every night, in whatever toils or objects, whatever failures or triumphs, the day

had been consumed—every night, before I laid my head upon my widowed and lonely pillow, I had knelt down, and lifted my heart to Heaven, blending the hopes of that heaven with the memory and the vision of Isora. Prayer had seemed to me a commune not only with the living God, but with the dead by whom His dwelling is surrounded. Pleasant and soft was it to turn to one thought, to which all the holiest portions of my nature clung, between the wearying acts of this hard and harsh drama of existence. Even the bitterness of Isora's early and unavenged death passed away, when I thought of the heaven to which she was gone, and in which, though I journeyed now through sin and travail, and recked little if the paths of others differed from my own, I yet trusted, with a solemn trust, that I should meet her at last. There was I to merit her with a love as undying, and at length as pure as her own. It was this that at the stated hour in which, after my prayer for our reunion, I surrendered my spirit to the bright and wild visions of her far, but *not impassable* home,—it was this which for that single hour made all around me a paradise of delighted thoughts! It was not the little earth, nor the cold sky, nor the changing wave, nor the perishable turf—no, nor the dead wall, and the narrow chamber which were round me then! No dreamer ever was so far from the localities of flesh and life as I was in that enchanted hour: a light seemed to settle upon all things round me; her voice murmured on my ear, her kisses melted on my brow; I shut my eyes, and I fancied that I beheld her!

Wherefore was this comfort?—whence came the spell which admitted me to this fairy land? What was the source of the hope, and the rapture, and the delusion? Was it not the deep certainty that *Isora yet existed*—that her spirit, her nature, her love were preserved, were inviolate, were the same? That they watched over me yet, that she knew that in that hour I was with her—that she felt my prayer—that even then she anticipated the moment when my soul should burst the human prison-house, and be once more blended with her own?

What! and was this to be no more? Were those mystic and sweet revealings to be mute to me for ever? Were my thoughts of Isora to be henceforth bounded to the charnel house aud the worm? Was she indeed *no more?* *No more*—O, intolerable despair!—Why, there was not a thing I had once known, not a dog that I had caressed, not a book that I had read, which I could know that I should see *no more*, and, knowing, not feel something of regret. No more! were we, indeed, parted for ever and for ever? Had she gone in her young years, with her warm affections, her new hopes, all green and unwithered at her heart, at once into dust, stillness, ice? And had I known her only for one year, one little year, to see her torn from me by a violent and bloody death, and to be left a mourner in this vast and eternal charnel, without a solitary consolation, or a gleam of hope? Was the earth to be henceforth a mere mass conjured from the bones and fattened by the clay of our dead sires?—were the stars and the moon to be mere atoms and specks of a chill light, no longer worlds, which the ardent spirit might hereafter reach, and be fitted to enjoy? Was the heaven—the tender, blue, loving heaven, in whose far regions I had dreamt was Isora's home, and had, therefore, grown better and happier when I gazed upon it, to be nothing but cloud and air? and had the love, which had seemed so immortal, and so springing from that which had not blent itself with mortality, been but a gross lamp fed only by the properties of a brute nature, and placed in a dark cell of clay, to glimmer, to burn, and to expire with the frail walls which it had illumined? Dust, death, worms,—were these the heritage of love and hope, of thought, of passion, of all that breathed, and kindled, and exalted, and *created* within?

Could I contemplate this idea, could I believe it possible? *I could not.* But against the abstract, the logical arguments for that idea—had I a reply? I shudder as I write that at *that* time I had not! I endeavored to fix my whole thoughts to the study of those subtle reasonings which I had hitherto so imperfectly conned; but my mind was jarring, irresolute, bewildered, confused; my stake seemed too vast to allow me coolness for the game.

Whoever has had cause for some refined and deep study in the midst of the noisy and loud world, may perhaps readily comprehend that feeling which now possessed me; a feeling that it was utterly impossible to abstract and concentrate one's thoughts, while at the mercy of every intruder, and fevered and fretful by every

disturbance. Men, early and long accustomed to mingle such reflections with the avocations of courts and cities, have grown callous to these interruptions, and it has been in the very heart of the multitude that the profoundest speculations have been cherished and produced; but I was not of this mould. The world, which before had been distasteful, now grew insufferable; I longed for some seclusion, some utter solitude, some quiet and unpenetrated nook, that I might give my undivided mind to the knowledge of these things, and build the tower of divine reasonings by which I might ascend to heaven. It was at this time, and in the midst of my fiercest internal conflict, that the great Czar died, and I was suddenly recalled to Russia.

"Now," I said, when I heard of my release, "now shall my wishes be fulfilled."

I sent to Bezoni. He came, but he refused, as indeed he had for some time done, to speak to me further upon the question which so wildly engrossed me. "I forgive you," said I, when we parted, "I forgive you for all that you have cost me; I feel that the moment is now at hand when my faith shall frame a weapon wherewith to triumph over yours!"

Father in Heaven! thanks be to thee that my doubts were at last removed, and the cloud rolled away from my soul.

Bezoni embraced me, and wept over me. "All good men," said he, "have a mighty interest in your success; for me there is nothing dark, even in the mute grave, if it covers the ashes of one who has loved and served his brethren, and done, with a wilful heart, no living creature wrong."

Soon afterwards the Italian lost his life in attending the victims of a fearful and contagious disease, whom even the regular practitioners of the healing art hesitated to visit.

At this moment I am, in the strictest acceptation of the words, a believer and a Christian. I have neither anxiety nor doubt upon the noblest and the most comforting of all creeds, and I am grateful, among the other blessings which faith has brought me—I am grateful that it has brought me CHARITY! Dark to all human beings was Bezoni's doctrine — dark, above all, to those who have mourned on earth—so withering to all the hopes which cling the most enduringly to the heart, was his unhappy creed—that he who knows how inseparably, though insensibly, our moral legislation is woven with our supposed self-interest, will scarcely marvel at, even while he condemns, the unwise and unholy persecution which that creed universally sustains! Many a most wretched hour, many a pang of agony and despair, did those doctrines inflict upon myself; but I know that the intention of Bezoni was benevolence, and that the practice of his life was virtue: and while my reason tells me that God will not punish the reluctant and involuntary error of one to whom all God's creatures were so dear, my religion bids me hope that I shall meet him in that world where no error *is*, and where the Great Spirit to whom all human passions are unknown, avenges the momentary doubt of His justice by a proof of the infinity of His mercy.

BOOK SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

The Retreat.

I ARRIVED at St. Petersburgh, and found the Czarina, whose conjugal perfidy was more than suspected, tolerably resigned to the extinction of that dazzling life, whose incalculable and godlike utility it is reserved for posterity to appreciate! I have observed, by the way, that, in general, men are the less mourned by their families in proportion as they are the more mourned by the community. The great are seldom amiable; and those who are the least lenient to our errors are invariably our relations!

Many circumstances at that time conspired to make my request to quit the imperial service appear natural and appropriate. The death of the Czar, joined to a growing jealousy and suspicion between the English monarch and Russia, which, though long existing, was now become more evident and notorious than heretofore, gave me full opportunity to observe that my pardon had been obtained from King George three years since, and that private as well as national ties rendered my return to England a measure not only of expediency but necessity. The imperial Catherine granted me my dismissal in the most flattering terms, and added the high distinction of the order founded in honor of the memorable feat by which she had saved her royal consort and the Russian army, to the order of St. Andrew, which I had already received.

I transferred my wealth, now immense, to England, and, with the pomp which became the rank and reputation Fortune had bestowed upon me, I commenced the long land journey I had chalked out to myself. Although I had alleged my wish to revisit England as the main reason of my retirement from Russia, I had also expressed an intention of visiting Italy previous to my return to England. The physicians, indeed, had recommended to me that delicious climate as an antidote to the ills my constitution had sustained in the freezing skies of the north; and in my own heart I had secretly appointed some more solitary part of the Divine Land for the scene of my purposed hermitage and seclusion. It is indeed astonishing how those who have lived much in cold climates yearn for lands of mellow light and summer luxuriance; and I felt for a southern sky the same resistless longing which sailors, in the midst of the vast ocean, have felt for the green fields and various landscape of the shore.

I traversed, then, the immense tracts of Russia — passed through Hungary — entered Turkey, which I had wished to visit, where I remained a short time; and, crossing the Adriatic, hailed, for the first time, the Ausonian shore. It was the month of May—that month, of whose lustrous beauty none in a northern clime can dream—that I entered Italy. It may serve as an instance of the power with which a thought, that however important, is generally deemed of too abstract and metaphysical a nature deeply to engross the mind, possessed me then, that I—no cold nor unenthusiastic votary of the classic Muse—made no pilgrimage to city or ruin, but, after a brief sojourn at Ravenna, where I dismissed all my train, set out alone to find the solitary cell for which I now sickened with a hermit's love.

It was at a small village at the foot of the Apennines that I found the object of my search. Strangely enough, there blended with my philosophical ardor a deep mixture of my old romance. Nature, to whose voice the dweller in cities, and struggler with mankind, had been so long obtuse, now pleaded audibly at my heart, and called me to her embraces, as a

mother calls unto her wearied child. My eye, as with a new vision, became opened to the mute yet eloquent loveliness of this most fairy earth; and hill and valley—the mirror of silent waters—the sunny stillness of woods, and the old haunts of satyr and nymph—revived in me the fountains of past poetry, and became the receptacles of a thousand spells, mightier than the charms of any enchanter save Love—which was departed—Youth, which was nearly gone—and Nature, which (more vividly than ever) existed for me still.

I chose, then, my retreat. As I was fastidious in its choice, I cannot refrain from the luxury of describing it. Ah, little did I dream that I had come thither, not only to find a divine comfort, but the sources of a human and most passionate woe! Mightiest of the Roman bards! in whom tenderness and reason were so entwined, and who didst sanctify even thine unholy errors with so beautiful and rare a genius! what an invariable truth one line of thine has expressed: "Even in the fairest fountain of delight there is a secret and evil spring eternally bubbling up and scattering its bitter waters over the very flowers which surround its margin!"

In the midst of a lovely and tranquil vale was a small cottage; that was my home. The good people there performed for me all the hospitable offices I required. At a neighboring monastery I had taken the precaution to make myself known to the superior. Not all Italians—no, nor all monks—belong to either of the two great tribes into which they are generally divided—knaves or fools. The Abbot Anselmo was a man of rather a liberal and enlarged mind; he not only kept my secret, which was necessary to my peace, but he took my part, which was, perhaps, necessary to my safety. A philosopher, who desires only to convince himself, and upon one subject, does not require many books. Truth lies in a small compass; and for my part, in considering any speculative subject, I would sooner have with me one book of Euclid, as a model, than all the library of the Vatican, as authorities. But then I am not fond of drawing upon any resources but those of reason for reasonings; wiser men than I am are not so strict. The few books that I did require were, however, of a nature very illicit in Italy; the good father passed them to me from Ravenna, under his own protection. "I was a holy man," he said, "who wished to render the Catholic church a great service, by writing a vast book against certain atrocious opinions; and the works I read were, for the most part, works that I was about to confute." This report gained me protection and respect; and, after I had ordered my agent at Ravenna to forward to the excellent abbot a piece of plate, and a huge cargo of a rare Hungary wine, it was not the abbot's fault if I was not the most popular person in the neighborhood.

But to my description:—my home was a cottage—the valley in which it lay was divided by a mountain stream, which came from the forest Apennine, a sparkling and wild stranger, and softened into quiet and calm as it proceeded through its green margin in the vale. And that margin, how dazzlingly green it was! At the distance of about a mile from my hut, the stream was broken into a slight waterfall, whose sound was heard distinct and deep in that still place: and often I paused, from my midnight thoughts, to listen to its enchanted and wild melody. The fall was unseen by the ordinary wanderer, for, there, the stream passed through a thick copse; and even when you pierced the grove, and gained the water-side, dark trees hung over the turbulent wave, and the silver spray was thrown upward through the leaves, and fell in diamonds upon the deep green sod.

This was the most favored haunt with me; the sun glancing through the idle leaves—the music of the water—the solemn absence of all other sounds, except the songs of birds, to which the ear grew accustomed, and, at last, in the abstraction of thought, scarcely distinguished from the silence—the fragrant herbs—and the unnumbered and nameless flowers which formed my couch—were all calculated to make me pursue uninterruptedly the thread of contemplation which I had, in the less voluptuous and harsher solitude of the closet, first woven from the web of austerest thought. I say pursue, for it was too luxurious and sensual a retirement for the conception of a rigid and severe train of reflection; at least it would have been so to me. But when the thought *is once born*, such scenes seem to me the most fit to cradle and to rear it. The torpor of the physical, appears to leave to the mental, frame a full scope and power; the absence of human cares, sounds, and intrusions, becomes the best nurse to con-

templation; and even that delicious and vague sense of enjoyment which would seem, at first, more genial to the fancy than the mind, preserves the thought undisturbed, because contented; so that all but the scheming mind becomes lapped in sleep, and the mind itself lives distinct and active as a dream;—a dream, not vague, nor confused, nor unsatisfying, but endowed with more than the clearness, the precision, the vigor of waking life.

A little way from this waterfall was a fountain, a remnant of a classic and golden age. Never did Naiad gaze on a more glassy mirror, or dwell in a more divine retreat. Through a crevice in an overhanging mound of the emerald earth, the father stream of the fountain crept out, born, like Love, among flowers, and in the most sunny smiles; it then fell, broadening and glowing, into a marble basin, at whose bottom, in the shining noon, you might see a soil which mocked the very hues of gold, and the water insects, in their quaint shapes, and unknown sports, grouping or gliding in the midmost wave. A small temple, of the lightest architecture, stood before the fountain; and, in a niche therein, a mutilated statue—possibly of the Spirit of the Place. By this fountain, my evening walk would linger till the short twilight melted away, and the silver wave trembled in the light of the western star. Oh! then, what feelings gathered over me as I turned slowly homeward; the air still, breathless, shining—the stars, gleaming over the woods of the far Apennine—the hills, growing huger in the shade—the small insects humming on the wing—and, ever and anon, the swift bat, wheeling round and amidst them—the music of the waterfall deepening on the ear; and the light and hour lending even a mysterious charm to the cry of the weird owl, flitting after its prey,—all this had a harmony in my thoughts, and a food for the meditations in which my days and nights were consumed. The World moulders away the fabric of our early nature, and Solitude rebuilds it on a firmer base.

CHAPTER II.

The Victory.

O EARTH! Reservoir of life, over whose deep bosom brood the wings of the Universal Spirit, shaking upon thee a blessing and a power—a blessing and a power to produce and reproduce the living from the dead, so that our flesh is woven from the same atoms which were once the atoms of our sires, and the inexhaustible nutriment of Existence is Decay! O eldest and most solemn Earth, blending even thy loveliness and joy with a terror and an awe! thy sunshine is girt with clouds, and circled with storm and tempest: thy day cometh from the womb of darkness, and returneth unto darkness, as man returns unto thy bosom. The green herb that laughs in the valley, the water that signs merrily along the wood; the many-winged and all-searching air, which garners life as a harvest, and scatters it as a seed; all are pregnant with corruption and carry the cradled death within them, as an oak banqueteth the destroying worm. But who that looks upon thee, and loves thee, and inhales thy blessings, will ever mingle too deep a moral with his joy? Let us not ask whence come the garlands that we wreathe around our altars, or shower upon our feasts: will they not bloom as brightly, and breathe with as rich a fragrance, whether they be plucked from the garden or the grave? O Earth, my Mother Earth! dark Sepulchre that closes upon all which the Flesh bears, but Vestibule of the vast regions which the Soul shall pass, how leapt my heart within me when I first fathomed thy real spell!

Yes! never shall I forget the rapture with which I hailed the light that dawned upon me at last! Never shall I forget the suffocating—the full—the ecstatic joy, with which I saw the mightiest of all human hopes accomplished; and felt, as if an angel spoke, that there is a life beyond the grave! Tell me not of the pride of ambition — tell me not of the triumphs of science: never had ambition so lofty an end as the search after immortality! never had science so sublime a triumph as the conviction that immortality will be gained! I had been at my task the whole night,—pale alchymist, seeking from meaner truths to extract the greatest of all! At the first hour of day, lo! the gold was there: the labor, for which I would have relinquished life, was accomplished; the dove descended upon the waters of my soul. I fled from the house. I was possessed as with a spirit. I ascended a hill, which looked for leagues over the sleeping valley. A gray mist hung around me like a

veil; I paused, and the great Sun broke slowly forth; I gazed upon its majesty, and my heart swelled. "So rises the soul," I said, "from the vapors of this dull being; but the soul waneth not, neither setteth it, nor knoweth it any night, save that from which it dawneth!" —The mists rolled gradually away, the sunshine deepened, and the face of nature lay in smiles, yet silently, before me. It lay before me, a scene that I had often witnessed, and hailed, and worshipped; *but it was not the same:* a glory had passed over it; it was steeped in a beauty and a holiness, in which neither youth, nor poetry, nor even love, had ever robed it before! The change which the earth had undergone was like that of some being we have loved—when death is past, and from a mortal it becomes an angel!

I uttered a cry of joy, and was then as silent as all round me. I felt as if henceforth there was a new compact between nature and myself. I felt as if every tree, and blade of grass, were henceforth to be eloquent with a voice, and instinct with a spell. I felt as if a religion had entered into the earth, and made oracles of all that the earth bears; the old fables of Dodona were to become realized, and *the very leaves* to be hallowed by a sanctity, and to murmur with a truth. I was no longer only a part of that which withers and decays: I was no longer a machine of clay, moved by a spring, and to be trodden into the mire which I had trod; I was no longer tied to humanity by links which could never be broken, and which, if broken, would avail me not. I was become, as by a miracle, a part of a vast, though unseen, spirit. It was not to the matter, but to the essences, of things that I bore kindred and alliance; the stars and the heavens resumed over me their ancient influence; and, as I looked along the far hills and the silent landscape, a voice seemed to swell from the stillness, and to say, "I am the life of these things, a spirit distinct from the things themselves. It is to me that you belong for ever and for ever; separate, but equally indissoluble; apart, but equally eternal!"

I spent the day upon the hills. It was evening when I returned. I lingered by the old fountain, and saw the stars rise, and tremble, one by one, upon the wave. The hour was that which Isora had loved the best, and that which the love of her had consecrated the most to me. And never, oh, never, did it sink into my heart with a deeper sweetness, or a more soothing balm. I had once more knit my soul to Isora's: I could once more look from the toiling and the dim earth, and forget that Isora had left me, in dreaming of our re-union. Blame me not, you who indulge in a religious hope more severe and more sublime—you who miss no footsteps from the earth, nor pine for a voice that your human wanderings can hear no more—blame me not, you whose pulses beat not for the wild love of the created, but whose spirit languishes only for a nearer commune with the Creator—blame me not too harshly for my mortal wishes, nor think that my faith was the less sincere because it was tinted in the most unchanging dyes of the human heart, and indissolubly woven with the memory of the dead! Often from our weaknesses our strongest principles of conduct are born; and from the acorn, which a breeze has wafted, springs the oak which defies the storm.

The first intoxication and rapture consequent upon the reward of my labor passed away; but, unlike other excitement, it was followed not by languor, or a sated and torpid calm; a soothing and delicious sensation possessed me—my turbulent senses slept; and Memory, recalling the world, rejoiced at the retreat which Hope had acquired.

I now surrendered myself to a nobler philosophy than in crowds and cities I had hitherto known. I no longer satirized—I inquired; I no longer derided—I examined. I looked from the natural proofs of immortality to the written promise of our Father—I sought not to baffle men, but to worship Truth—I applied myself more to the knowledge of good and evil—I bowed my soul before the loveliness of Virtue; and though scenes of wrath and passion yet lowered in the failure, and I was again speedily called forth—to act—to madden—to contend—perchance to sin—the Image is still unbroken, and the Votary has still an offering for its Altar!

CHAPTER III.

The Hermit of the Well.

THE thorough and deep investigation of those principles from which we learn the im-

mortality of the soul, and the nature of its proper ends, leads the mind through such a course of reflection and of study—it is attended with so many exalting, purifying, and, if I may so say, etherealizing thoughts, that I do believe no man has ever pursued it, and not gone back to the world a better and a nobler man than he was before. Nay, so deeply must these elevating and refining studies be conned, so largely and sensibly must they enter the intellectual system, that I firmly think that even a sensualist who has only considered the subject with a view to convince himself that he is clay, and has therefore an excuse to the curious conscience for his grosser desires; nay, should he come to his wished for, yet desolate, conclusion, from which the abhorrent nature shrinks and recoils, I do nevertheless firmly think, should the study have been long and deep, that he would wonder to find his desires had lost their poignancy, and his objects their charm. He would descend from the Alp he had climbed to the low level on which he formerly deemed it a bliss to dwell, with the feeling of one who, having long drawn in high places an empyreal air, has become unable to inhale the smoke and the thick vapor he inhaled of yore. His soul once aroused would stir within him, though he felt it not, and though he grew not a believer, he would cease to be only the voluptuary.

I meant at one time to have here stated the arguments which had perplexed me on one side, and those which afterwards convinced me on the other. I do not do so for many reasons, one of which will suffice, viz., the evident and palpable circumstance that a dissertation of that nature would, in a biography like the present, be utterly out of place and season. Perhaps, however, at a later period of life, I may collect my own opinions on the subject into a separate work, and bequeath that work to future generations, upon the same conditions as the present memoir.

One day I was favored by a visit from one of the monks at the neighboring abbey. After some general conversation he asked me if I had yet encountered the Hermit of the Well? "No," said I, and I was going to add, that I had not even heard of him, "but I now remember that the good people of the house have more than once spoken to me of him as a rigid and self-mortifying recluse."

"Yes," said the holy friar; "Heaven forbid that I should say aught against the practice of the saints and pious men to deny unto themselves the lusts of the flesh, but such penances may be carried too far. However, it is an excellent custom, and the Hermit of the Well is an excellent creature. *Santa Maria!* what delicious stuff is that Hungary wine your scholarship was pleased to bestow upon our father Abbot. He suffered me to taste it the eve before last. I had been suffering with a pain in the reins, and the wine acted powerfully upon me as an efficacious and inestimable medicine. Do you find, my son, that it bore the journey to your lodging here, as well as to the convent cellars?"

"Why, really, my father, I have none of it here; but the people of the house have a few flasks of a better wine than ordinary, if you will deign to taste it in lieu of the Hungary wine."

"Oh—oh!" said the monk, groaning, "my reins trouble me much—perhaps the wine may comfort me!" and the wine was brought.

"It is not of so rare a flavor as that which you sent to our reverend father," said the monk, wiping his mouth with his long sleeve. "Hungary must be a charming place—is it far from hence?—It joins the heretical—I pray your pardon—it joins the continent of England, I believe?"

"Not exactly, father; but whatever its topography, it is a rare country—for those who like it! But tell me of this Hermit of the Well. How long has he lived here—and how came he by his appellation? Of what country is he—and of what birth?"

"You ask me too many questions at once, my son. The country of the holy man is a mystery to us all. He speaks the Tuscan dialect well, but with a foreign ascent. Nevertheless, though the wine is not of Hungary, it has a pleasant flavor. I wonder how the rogues kept it so snugly from the knowledge and comfort of their pious brethren of the monastery."

"And how long has the hermit lived in your vicinity?"

"Nearly eight years, my son. It was one winter's evening that he came to our convent in the dress of a worldly traveller, to seek our hospitality, and a shelter for the night, which was inclement and stormy. He stayed with

us a few days, and held some conversation with our father Abbot; and one morning, after roaming in the neighborhood to look at the old stones and ruins, which is the custom of travellers, he returned, put into our box some certain alms, and two days afterwards he appeared in the place he now inhabits, and in the dress he assumes."

"And of what nature, my father, is the place, and of what fashion the dress?"

"Holy St. Francis!" exclaimed the father, with a surprise so great that I thought at first it related to the wine, "Holy St. Francis—have you not seen the well yet?"

"No, father, unless you speak of the fountain about a mile and a quarter distant."

"Tush—tush!" said the good man, "what ignoramuses you travellers are; you affect to know what kind of slippers Prester John wears and to have been admitted to the bed-chamber of *the Pagoda of China;* and yet, when one comes to sound you, you are as ignorant of everything a man of real learning knows as an Englishman is of his missal. Why, I thought that every fool in every country had heard of the Holy Well of St. Francis, situated exactly two miles from our famous convent, and that every fool in the neighborhood had seen it."

"What the fools, my father, whether in this neighborhood or any other may have heard or seen, I, who profess not ostensibly to belong to so goodly an order, cannot pretend to know; but be assured that the Holy Well of St. Francis is as unfamiliar to me as the Pagoda of China—Heaven bless *him*—is to you."

Upon this the learned monk, after expressing due astonishment, offered to show it to me; and as I thought I might by acquiescence get rid of him the sooner, and as, moreover, I wished to see the abbot, to whom some books for me had been lately sent, I agreed to the offer.

The well, said the monk, lay not above a mile out of the customary way to the monastery; and after *we* had finished the flask of wine, we sallied out on our excursion,—the monk upon a stately and strong ass—myself on foot.

The abbot, on granting me his friendship and protection, had observed that I was not the only stranger and recluse on whom his favor was bestowed. He had then mentioned the Hermit of the Well, as an eccentric and strange being, who lived an existence of rigid penance, harmless to others, painful only to himself. This story had been confirmed in the few conversations I had ever interchanged with my host and hostess, who seemed to take a peculiar pleasure in talking of the Solitary; and from them I had heard also many anecdotes of his charity towards the poor, and his attention to the sick. All these circumstances came into my mind as the good monk indulged his loquacity upon the subject, and my curiosity became, at last, somewhat excited respecting my fellow recluse.

I now learned from the monk that the post of Hermit of the Well was an office of which the present anchorite was by no means the first tenant. The well was one of those springs frequent in Catholic countries, to which a legend and a sanctity are attached; and twice a year, once in the spring, once in the autumn, the neighboring peasants flocked thither, on a stated day, to drink, and lose their diseases. As the spring most probably did possess some medicinal qualities, a few extraordinary cures had occurred; especially among those pious persons who took not biennial, but constant draughts;—and to doubt its holiness was downright heresy.

Now, hard by this well was a cavern, which, whether first formed by nature or art, was now, upon the whole, constructed into a very commodious abode; and here, for years beyond the memory of man, some solitary person had fixed his abode, to dispense and to bless the water, to be exceedingly well fed by the surrounding peasants, to wear a long gown of serge or sackcloth, and to be called the Hermit of the Well. So fast as each succeeding anchorite died there were enough candidates eager to supply his place; for it was no bad *metier* to some penniless impostor to become the quack and patentee of a holy specific. The choice of these candidates always rested with the superior of the neighboring monastery; and it is not impossible that he made an indifferently good percentage upon the annual advantages of his protection and choice.

At the time traveller appeared, the former hermit had just departed this life, and it was, therefore, to the vacancy thus occasioned, that he had procured himself to be elected. The incumbent appeard quite of a different mould from the former occupants of the hermitage

He accepted, it is true, the gifts laid at regular periods upon a huge stone between the hermitage and the well, but he distributed among the donors alms far more profitable than their gifts. He entered no village, borne upon an ass laden with twin sacks, for the purpose of sanctimoniously robbing the inhabitants; no profane songs were ever heard resounding from his dwelling by the peasant incautiously lingering at a late hour too near its vicinity; my guide, the monk, complained bitterly of his unsociability, and no scandalous legent of nymph-like comforters and damsel visitants haunting the sacred dwelling, escaped from the garrulous friar's well loaded budget.

"Does he study much?" said I, with the interest of a student.

"I fear me not," quoth the monk. "I have had occasion often to enter his abode, and I have examined all things with a close eye—for, praised be the Lord, I have faculties more than ordinarily clear and observant—but I have seen no books therein, excepting a missal, and a Latin or Greek Testament, I know not well which;—nay, so incurious or unlearned is the holy man that he rejected even a loan of the 'Life of St. Francis,' notwithstanding it has many and rare pictures, to say nothing of its most interesting and amazing tales."

More might the monk have said, had we not now suddenly entered a thick and sombre wood. A path cut through it was narrow, and only capable of admitting a traveller on foot or horseback; and the boughs over head were so darkly interlaced that the light scarcely, and only in broken and erratic glimmerings, pierced the canopy.

"It is the wood," said the monk, crossing himself, "wherein the wonderful adventure happened to St. Francis, which I will one day narrate at length to you."

"And we are near the well, I suppose?" said I.

"It is close at hand," answered the monk.

In effect we had not proceeded above fifty yards before the path brought us into a circular space of green sod, in the midst of which was a small square stone building, of plain, but not inelegant, shape, and evidently of great antiquity. At one side of this building was an iron handle, for the purpose of raising water, that cast itself into a stone basin, to which was affixed by a strong chain, an iron cup. An inscription, in monkish Latin, was engraved over the basin, requesting the traveller to pause and drink, and importing that what that water was to the body, faith was to the soul; near the cistern was a rude seat, formed by the trunk of a tree. The door of the well-house was of iron, and secured by a chain and lock; perhaps the pump was so contrived that only a certain quantum of the sanctified beverage could be drawn up at a time, without application to some mechanism within: and wayfarers were thereby prevented from helping themselves *ad libitum*, and thus depriving the anchorite of the profit and the necessity of his office.

It was certainly a strange, lonely, and wild place; and the green sward, round as a fairy ring, in the midst of trees, which, black, close, and huge, circled it like a wall: and the solitary gray building in the centre, gaunt and cold, and startling the eye with the abruptness of its appearance, and the strong contrast made by its wan hues to the dark verdure and forest gloom around it!

I took a draught of the water, which was very cold and tasteless, and reminded the monk of his disorder in the reins, to which a similar potation might possibly be efficacious. To this suggestion the monk answered that he would certainly try the water some other time; but that at present the wine he had drunk might pollute its divine properties. So saying, he turned off the conversation by inviting me to follow him to the hermitage.

In our way thither he pointed out a large fragment of stone, and observed that the water would do me evil instead of good if I forgot to remunerate its guardian. I took the hint, and laid a piece of silver on the fragment.

A short journey through the wood brought us to the foot of a hill covered with trees, and having at its base a strong stone door, the entrance to the excavated home of the anchorite. The monk gently tapped thrice at this door, but no answer came. "The holy man is from home," said he, "let us return."

We did so; and the monk, keeping behind me, managed, as he thought, unseen, to leave the stone as naked as we had found it! We now struck through another path in the wood, and were soon at the convent. I did not lose the opportunity to question the abbot respecting his tenant: I learnt from him little more than the particulars I have already nar-

rated, save that in concluding his details, he said:

"I can scarcely doubt but that the hermit is, like yourself, a person of rank; his bearing and his mien appear to denote it. He has given, and gives yearly, large sums to the uses of the convent: and, though he takes the customary gifts of the pious villagers, it is only by my advice, and for the purpose of avoiding suspicion. Should he be considered rich, it might attract cupidity; and there are enough bold hands and sharp knives in the country to place the wealthy and the unguarded in some peril. Whoever he may be,—for he has not confided his secret to me—I do not doubt but that he is doing penance for some great crime; and, whatever be the crime, I suspect that its earthly punishment is nearly over. The hermit is naturally of a delicate and weak frame, and year after year I have marked him sensibly wearing away; so that when I last saw him, three days since, I was shocked at the visible ravages which disease or penance had engraven upon him. If ever Death wrote legibly, its characters are in that brow and cheek."

"Poor man! Know you not even whom to apprise of his decease when he is no more?"

"I do not yet; but the last time I saw him he told me that he found himself drawing near his end, and that he should not quit life without troubling me with one request."

After this the abbot spoke of other matters, and my visit expired.

Interested in the recluse more deeply than I acknowledged to myself, I found my steps insensibly leading me homeward by the more circuitous road which wound first by the holy well. I did not resist the impulse, but walked musingly onward by the waning twilight, for the day was now over, until I came to the well. As I emerged from the wood, I started involuntarily and drew back. A figure, robed from head to foot in a long sable robe, sate upon the rude seat beside the well; sate so still, so motionless, that coming upon it abruptly in that strange place, the heart beat irregularly at an apparition so dark in hue, and so death-like in its repose. The hat, large, broad, and overhanging, which suited the costume, was lying on the ground: and the face, which inclined upward, seemed to woo the gentle air of the quiet and soft skies. I approached a few steps, and saw the profile of the countenance more distinctly than I had done before. It was of a marble whiteness; the features, though sharpened and attenuated by disease, were of surpassing beauty; the hair was exceedingly, almost effeminately, long, and hung in waves of perfect jet on either side; the mouth was closed firmly, and deep lines or rather furrows, were traced from its corners to either nostril. The stranger's beard, of a hue equally black as the hair, was dishevelled and neglected, but not very long; and one hand, which lay on the sable robe, was so thin and wan you might have deemed the very starlight could have shone through it. I did not doubt that it was the recluse whom I saw; I drew near and accosted him.

"Your blessing, holy father, and your permission to taste the healing of your well."

Sudden as was my appearance, and abrupt my voice, the hermit evinced by no startled gesture a token of surprise. He turned very slowly round, cast upon me an indifferent glance, and said, in a sweet and very low tone,

"You have my blessing, stranger; there is water in the cistern—drink, and be healed."

I dipped the bowl in the basin, and took sparingly of the water. In the accent and tone of the stranger, my ear, accustomed to the dialects of many nations, recognized something English; I resolved, therefore, to address him in my native tongue, rather than the indifferent Italian in which I had first accosted him.

"The water is fresh and cooling; would, holy father, that it could penetrate to a deeper malady than the ills of flesh: that it could assuage the fever of her heart, or lave from the wearied mind the dust which it gathers from the mire and travail of the world."

Now the hermit testified surprise; but it was slight and momentary. He gazed upon me more attentively than he had done before, and said, after a pause,

"My countryman! and in this spot! It is not often that the English penetrate into places where no ostentatious celebrity dwells to sate curiosity and flatter pride. My countryman! —it is well, and perhaps fortunate. Yes," he said, after a second pause, "yes; it were indeed a boon, had the earth a fountain for the wounds which fester, and the disease which consumes the heart."

"The earth has oblivion, father, if not a cure."

"It is false!" cried the hermit, passionately, and starting wildly from his seat; "the earth has *no* oblivion. The grave—is *that* forgetfulness? No, no—*there is no grave for the soul!* The deeds pass—the flesh corrupts—but the memory passes not, and withers not. From age to age, from world to world, through eternity, throughout creation, it is perpetuated—an immortality—a curse—*a hell!*"

Surprised by the vehemence of the hermit, I was still more startled by the agonizing and ghastly expression of his face.

"My father," said I, "pardon me, if I have pressed upon a sore. I also have that within, which, did a stranger touch it, would thrill my whole frame with torture, and I would fain ask from your holy soothing, and pious comfort, something of alleviation or of fortitude."

The hermit drew near to me; he laid his thin hand upon my arm, and looked long and wistfully in my face. It was then that a suspicion crept through me which after observation proved to be true, that the wandering of those dark eyes, and the meaning of that blanched brow were tinctured with insanity.

"Brother, and fellow man," said he, mournfully, "hast thou in truth suffered? and dost thou still smart at the remembrance? We are friends then. If thou hast suffered as much as I have, I will fall down and do homage to thee as a superior; for pain has its ranks, and I think at times, that none ever climbed the height that I have done. Yet you look not like one who has had nights of delirium, and days in which the heart lay in the breast, as a corpse endowed with consciousness might lie in the grave, feeling the worm gnaw it, and the decay corrupt, and yet incapable of resistance or of motion. Your cheek is thin, but firm; your eye is haughty and bright; you have the air of one who has lived with men, and struggled and not been vanquished in the struggle. Suffered! No, man, no—*you* have not suffered!"

"My father, it is not in the countenance that Fate graves her records. I have, it is true, contended with my fellows; and if wealth and honor be the premium, not in vain: but I have not contended against Sorrow with a like success; and I stand before you, a being who, if passion be a tormentor, and the death of the loved a loss, has borne that which the most wretched will not envy."

Again a fearful change came over the face of the recluse—he grasped my arm more vehemently, "You speak my own sorrows—you utter my own curse—I will see you again—you may do my last will better than yon monks. Can I trust you? If you have in truth known misfortune, I will!—I will—yea, even to the outpouring——Merciful, merciful God, what would I say—what would I reveal!"

Suddenly changing his voice, he released me, and said, touching his forehead with a meaning gesture, and a quiet smile, "You say you are my rival in pain? Have you ever known the rage and despair of the heart mount *here?* It is a wonderful thing to be calm as I am now, when that rising makes itself felt in fire and torture!"

"If there be aught, father, which a man who cares not what country he visit, or what deed—so it be not of guilt or shame—he commit, can do towards the quiet of your soul, say it, and I will attempt your will."

"You are kind, my son," said the hermit, resuming his first melancholy and dignified composure of mien and bearing, "and there is something in your voice, which seems to me like a tone that I have heard in youth. Do you live near at hand?"

"In the valley, about four miles hence; I am, like yourself, a fugitive from the world."

"Come to me then to-morrow at eve; to-morrow!—No, that is a holy eve, and I must keep it with scourge and prayer. The next at sunset. I shall be collected then, and I would fain know more of you than I do. Bless you, my son—adieu."

"Yet stay, father, may I not conduct you home?"

"No—my limbs are weak, but I trust they can carry me to that home, till I be borne thence to my last. Farewell! the night grows, and man fills even these shades with peril. The eve after next, at sunset, we meet again."

So saying, the hermit waved his hand, and I stood apart, watching his receding figure, until the trees cloaked the last glimpse from my view. I then turned homeward, and reached my cottage in safety, despite of the hermit's caution. But I did not retire to rest: a powerful foreboding, rather than suspicion, that, in the worn and wasted form which I had beheld, there was

identity with one whom I had not met for years, and whom I had believed to be no more, thrillingly possessed me.

"Can—can it be?" thought I. "Can grief have a desolation, or remembrance an agony, sufficient to create so awful a change? And of all human beings, for that one to be singled out; that one in whom passion and sin were, if they existed, nipped in their earliest germ, and seemingly rendered barren of all fruit! If too, almost against the evidence of sight and sense, an innate feeling has marked in that most altered form the traces of a dread recognition, would not his memory have been yet more vigilant than mine? Am I so changed that he should have looked me in the face so wistfully, and found there naught save the lineaments of a stranger?" And, actuated by this thought, I placed the light by the small mirror which graced my chamber. I recalled, as I gazed, my features as they had been in earliest youth. "No," I said, with a sigh, "there is nothing here that he should recognize."

And I said aright: my features, originally small and delicate, had grown enlarged and prominent. The long locks of my youth (for only upon state occasions did my early vanity consent to the fashion of the day) were succeeded by curls, short and crisped; the hues, alternately pale and hectic, that the dreams of romance had once spread over my cheek, had settled into the unchanging bronze of manhood; the smooth lip, and unshaven chin, were clothed with a thick hair; the once unfurrowed brow was habitually knit in thought; and the ardent, restless expression that boyhood wore had yielded to the quiet, unmoved countenance of one, in whom long custom has subdued all outward sign of emotion, and many and various events left no prevalent token of the mind, save that of an habitual, but latent resolution. My frame, too, once scarcely less slight than a woman's, was become knit and muscular, and nothing was left by which, in the foreign air, the quiet brow, and the athletic form, my very mother could have recognized the slender figure and changeful face of the boy she had last beheld. The very sarcasm of the eye was gone: and I had learnt the world's easy lesson—the dissimulation of composure.

I have noted one thing in others, and it was particularly noticeable in me, viz. that few who mix very largely with men, and with the courtier's or the citizen's design, ever retain the key and tone of their original voice. The voice of a young man is as yet modulated by nature, and expresses the passion of the moment; that of the matured pupil of art expresses rather the customary occupation of his life: whether he aims at persuading, convincing, or commanding others, his voice irrevocably settles into the key he ordinarily employs; and, as persuasion is the means men chiefly employ in their commerce with each other, especially in the regions of a court, so a tone of artificial blandness and subdued insinuation is chiefly that in which the accents of worldly men are clothed; the artificial intonation, long continued, grows into nature, and the very pith and basis of the original sound fritter themselves away. The change was great in me, for at that time, which I brought in comparison with the present, my age was one in which the voice is yet confused and undecided, struggling between the accents of youth and boyhood; so that even this most powerful and unchanging of all claims upon the memory was in a great measure absent in me; and nothing but an occasional and rare tone could have produced even that faint and unconscious recognition which the hermit had confessed.

I must be pardoned these egotisms, which the nature of my story renders necessary.

With what eager impatience did I watch the hours to the appointed interview with the hermit languish themselves away! However, before that time arrived, and towards the evening of the next day, I was surprised by the rare honor of a visit from Anselmo himself. He came attended by two of the medicant friars of his order, and they carried between them a basket of tolerable size, which, as mine hostess afterwards informed me, with many a a tear, went back somewhat heavier than it came, from the load of certain *receptacula* of that rarer wine which she had had, the evening before, the indiscreet hospitality to produce.

The abbot came to inform me that the hermit had been with him that morning, making many inquiries respecting me. "I told him," said he, "that I was acquainted with your name and birth, but that I was under a solemn promise not to reveal them, without your consent; and I am now here, my son, to learn

from you whether that consent my be obtained?"

"Assuredly not, holy father!" said I, hastily; nor was I contented until I had obtained a renewal of his promise to that effect. This seemed to give the abbot some little chagrin: perhaps the hermit had offered a reward for my discovery. However, I knew that Anselmo, though a griping, was a trustworthy, man, and I felt safe in his renewed promise. I saw him depart with great satisfaction, and gave myself once more to conjectures respecting the strange recluse.

As, the next evening, I prepared to depart towards the hermitage, I took peculiar pains to give my person a foreign and disguised appearance. A loose dress, of rude and simple material, and a high cap of fur, were pretty successful in accomplishing this purpose. And, as I gave the last look at the glass before I left the house, I said, inly, "If there be any truth in my wild and improbable conjecture respecting the identity of the anchorite, I think time and this dress are sufficient wizards to secure me from a chance of discovery. I will keep a guard upon my words and tones, until, if my thought be verified, a moment fit for unmasking myself arrrives. But would to God that the thought be groundless! In such circumstances, and after such an absence, to meet *him!* No; and yet——Well, this meeting will decide."

CHAPTER IV.

The Solution of many Mysteries—a dark View of the Life and Nature of Man.

POWERFUL, though not clearly developed in my own mind, was the motive which made me so strongly desire to preserve the incognito during my interview with the hermit. I have before said that I could not resist a vague, but intense, belief that he was a person whom I had long believed in the grave; and I had more than once struggled against a dark, but passing, suspicion, that that person was in some measure—mediately, though not directly—connected with the mysteries of my former life. If both these conjectures were true, I thought it possible that the communication the hermit wished to make, might be made yet more willingly to me as a stranger than if he knew who was in reality his confidant. And, at all events, if I could curb the impetuous gushings of my own heart, which yearned for immediate disclosure, I might, by hint and prelude, ascertain the advantages and disadvantages of revealing myself.

I arrived at the well: the hermit was already at the place of rendezvous, seated in the same posture in which I had before seen him. I made my reverence, and accosted him.

"I have not failed you, father."

"That is rarely a true boast with men," said the hermit, smiling mournfully, but without sarcasm; "and were the promise of greater avail, it might not have been so rigidly kept."

"The promise, father, seemed to me of greater weight than you would intimate," answered I.

"How mean you?" said the hermit, hastily.

"Why, that we may perhaps serve each other by our meeting: you, father, may comfort me by your counsels; I you by my readiness to obey your request."

The hermit looked at me for some moments, and, as well as I could, I turned away my face from his gaze. I might have spared myself the effort. He seemed to recognize nothing familiar in my countenance; perhaps his mental malady assisted my own alteration.

"I have inquired respecting you," he said, after a pause, "and I hear that you are a learned and wise man, who have seen much of the world, and played the part both of soldier and of scholar, in its various theatres: is my information true?"

"Not true with respect to the learning, father, but true with regard to the experience. I have been a pilgrim in many countries of Europe."

"Indeed!" said the hermit, eagerly. "Come with me to my home, and tell me of the wonders you have seen."

I assisted the hermit to rise, and he walked slowly towards the cavern, leaning upon my arm. Oh, how that light touch thrilled through my frame! How I longed to cry, "Are you not the one whom I have loved, and mourned, and believed buried in the tomb?" But I checked myself. We moved on in silence. The hermit's hand was on the door of the cavern, when he said, in a calm tone, but with evident effort, and turning his face from me while he spoke:

"And did your wanderings ever carry you into the farther regions of the north? Did the fame of the great Czar ever lead you to the city he has founded?"

"I am right—I am right?" thought I, as I answered, "In truth, holy father, I spent not a long time at Petersburgh; but I am not a stranger either to its wonders, or its inhabitants."

"Possibly, then, you may have met with the English favorite of the Czar of whom I hear in my retreat that men have lately spoken somewhat largely?" The hermit paused again. We were now in a long, low passage, almost in darkness. I scarcely saw him, yet I heard a convulsed movement in his throat, before he uttered the remainder of the sentence. "He is called the Count Devereux."

"Father," said I, calmly, "I have both seen and known the man."

"Ha!" said the hermit, and he leant for a moment against the wall; "known him—and—how—how—I mean, where is he at this present time?"

"That, father, is a difficult question, respecting one who has led so active a life. He was ambassador at the court of ———, just before I left it."

We had now passed the passage, and gained a room of tolerable size; an iron lamp burnt within, and afforded a sufficient, but somewhat dim, light. The hermit, as I concluded my reply, sunk down on a long stone bench, beside a table of the same substance, and leaning his face on his hand, so that the long, large sleeve he wore, perfectly concealed his features, said, "Pardon me, my breath is short, and my frame weak—I am quite exhausted—but will speak to you more, anon."

I uttered a short answer, and drew a small wooden stool within a few feet of the hermit's seat. After a brief silence he rose, placed wine, bread, and preserved fruits, before me, and bade me eat. I seemed to comply with his request, and the apparent diversion of my attention from himself somewhat relieved the embarrassment under which he evidently labored.

"May I hope," he said, "that were my commission to this—to the Count Devereux—you would execute it faithfully and with speed? Yet stay—you have a high mien, as of one above fortune, but your garb is rude and poor; and if aught of gold could compensate your trouble, the hermit has other treasuries beside this cell."

"I will do your bidding, father, without robbing the poor. You wish then that I should seek Morton Devereux — you wish that I should summon him thither,—you wish to see, and to confer with him!"

"God of mercy forbid!" cried the hermit, and with such vehemence that I was startled from the design of revealing myself, which I was on the point of executing. "I would rather that these walls would crush me into dust, or that this solid stone would crumble beneath my feet—ay, even into a bottomless pit, than meet the glance of Morton Devereux!"

"Is it even so?" said I, stooping over the wine cup; "ye have been foes then, I suspect. —Well, it matters not—tell me your errand, and it shall be done."

"Done!" cried the hermit, and a new, and certainly a most natural suspicion darted within him, "done! and—fool that I am!—who, or what are you, that I should believe you take so keen an interest in the wishes of a man utterly unknown to you? I tell you that my wish is that you should cross seas and traverse lands until you find the man I have named to you. Will a stranger do this, and without hire —no—no—I was a fool, and will trust the monks, and give gold, and then my errand will be sped."

"Father, or rather, brother," said I, with a slow and firm voice, "for you are of mine own age, and you have the passion and the infirmity which make brethren of all mankind, I am one to whom all places are alike: it matters not whether I visit a northern or a souther clime—I have wealth, which is sufficient to smooth toil—I have leisure, which makes occupation an enjoyment. More than this, I am one, who in his gayest and wildest moments has ever loved mankind, and would have renounced at any time his own pleasure for the advantage of another. But at this time, above all others, I am most disposed to forget myself, and there is a passion in your words which leads me to hope that it may be a great benefit which I can confer upon you."

"You speak well," said the hermit, musingly, "and I may trust you; I will consider yet a little longer, and to-morrow at this hour, you

shall have my final answer. If you execute the charge I entrust to you, may the blessing of a dying and most wretched man cleave to you for ever !—But hush—the clock strikes—it is my hour of prayer."

And, pointing to a huge black clock that hung opposite the door, and indicated the hour of nine (according to our English mode of numbering the hours), the hermit fell on his knees, and, clasping his hands tightly, bent his face over them in the attitude of humiliation and devotion. I followed his example. After a few minutes he rose—"Once in every three hours," said he, with a ghastly expression, "for the last twelve years have I bowed my soul in anguish before God, and risen to feel that it was in vain—I am cursed without and within !"

"My father, my father, is this your faith in the mercies of the Redeemer who died for Man ?"

"Talk not to me of faith !" cried the hermit, wildly. "Ye laymen and worldlings know nothing of its mysteries and its powers. But begone ! the dread hour is upon me, when my tongue is loosed, and my brain darkened, and I know not my words, and shudder at my own thoughts. Begone ! no human being shall witness those moments—they are only for Heaven and my own soul."

So saying, this unhappy and strange being seized me by the arm and dragged me towards the passage we had entered. I was in doubt whether to yield to, or contend with, him; but there was a glare in his eye, and a flush upon his brow, which, while it betrayed the dreadful disease of his mind, made me fear that resistance to his wishes might operate dangerously upon a frame so feeble and reduced. I therefore mechanically obeyed him. He opened again the entrance to his rugged home, and the moonlight streamed wanly over his dark robes and spectral figure.

"Go," said he, more mildly than before—"go and forgive the vehemence of one whose mind and heart alike are broken within him. Go, but return to-morrow at sunset. Your air disposes me to trust you."

So saying, he closed the door upon me, and I stood without the cavern alone.

But did I return home ? Did I hasten to press my couch in sleep and sweet forgetfulness, while he was in that gloomy sepulchre of the living, a prey to anguish, and torn by the fangs of madness and a fierce disease ? No—on the damp grass, beneath the silent skies, I passed a night, which could scarcely have been less wretched than his own. My conjecture was now, and in full, confirmed. Heavens ! how I loved that man—how, from my youngest years, had my soul's fondest affections interlaced themselves with him !—with what anguish had I wept his imagined death ? and now to know that he lay within these walls, smitten from brain to heart with so fearful and mysterious a curse—to know, too, that he dreaded the sight of me—of me who would have laid down my life for his ! —the grave, which I imagined his home, had been a mercy to a doom like this.

"He fears," I murmured, and I wept as I said it, "to look on one who would watch over, and soothe, and bear with him, with more than a woman's love ! By what awful fate has this calamity fallen on one so holy and so pure ? or by what preordered destiny did I come to these solitudes, to find at the same time a new charm for the earth, and a spell to change it again into a desert and a place of woe ?"

All night I kept vigil by the cave, and listened if I could catch moan or sound; but everything was silent: thick walls of the rock kept even the voice of despair from my ear. The day dawned, and I retired among the trees, lest the hermit might come out unawares and see me. At sunrise I saw him appear for a few moments, and again retire, and I then hastened home, exhausted and wearied by the internal conflicts of the night, to gather coolness and composure for the ensuing interview, which I contemplated at once with eagerness and dread.

At the appointed hour, I repaired to the cavern: the door was partially closed; I opened it, hearing no answer to my knock, and walked gently along the passage; but I now heard shrieks, and groans, and wild laughter as I neared the rude chamber. I paused for a moment, and then in terror and dismay entered the apartment. It was empty, but I saw near the clock a small door; from within which the sounds that alarmed me proceeded. I had no scruple in opening it, and found myself in the hermit's sleeping chamber; a small dark room, where, upon a straw pallet, lay the wretched occupant in a state of frantic delirium. I stood mute and horror-struck, while his exclamations of frenzy burst upon my ear.

"There—there!" he cried, "I have struck thee to the heart, and now I will kneel, and kiss those white lips, and bathe my hands in that blood. Ha!—do I hate thee?—hate—ay—hate, abhor, detest! Have you the beads there?—let me tell them. Yes, I will go to the confessional—confess? No, no—all the priests in the world could not lift up a soul so heavy with guilt. Help—help—help! I am falling—falling—there is the pit, and the fire, and the devils! Do you hear them laugh?—I can laugh too!—ha—ha—ha! Hush, I have written it all out, in a fair hand—he shall read it—and then, O God! what curses he will heap upon my head? Blessed St. Francis hear me! Lazarus, Lazarus, speak for me!"

Thus did the hermit rave, while my flesh crept to hear him. I stood by his bedside, and called on him, but he neither heard nor saw me. Upon the ground, by the bed's head, as if it had dropt from under the pillow, was a packet sealed and directed to myself: I knew the handwriting at a glance, even though the letters were blotted and irregular, and possibly traced in the first moment that his present curse fell upon the writer. I placed the packet in my bosom: the hermit saw not the motion, he lay back on the bed, seemingly in utter exhaustion. I turned away, and hastened to the monastery for assistance. As I hurried through the passage, the hermit's shrieks again broke upon me, with a fiercer vehemence than before. I flew from them, as if they were sounds from the abyss of Hades. I flew till, breathless, and half-senseless myself, I fell down exhausted by the gate of the monastery.

The two most skilled in physic of the brethren were immediately summoned, and they lost not a moment in accompanying me to the cavern. All that evening, until midnight, the frenzy of the maniac seemed rather to increase than abate. But at that hour, exactly, indeed, as the clock struck twelve, he fell all at once into a deep sleep.

Then for the first time, but not till the wearied brethren had, at this favorable symptom, permitted themselves to return for a brief interval to the monastery, to seek refreshment for themselves, and to bring down new medicines for the patient—then, for the first time, I rose from the hermit's couch by which I had hitherto kept watch, and repairing to the outer chamber, took forth the packet superscribed with my name. There, alone in that gray vault, and by the sepulchral light of the single lamp, I read what follows.

THE HERMIT'S MANUSCRIPT.

"Morton Devereux, if ever this reach you, read it, shudder, and, whatever your afflictions, bless God that you are not as I am. Do you remember my prevailing characteristic as a boy? No, you do not. You will say 'devotion!' It was not! 'Gentleness.' 'It was not—it was JEALOUSY! Now does the truth flash on you? Yes, that was the disease that was in my blood, and in my heart, and through whose ghastly medium every living object was beheld. Did I love you? Yes, I loved you—ay, almost with a love equal to your own. I loved my mother—I loved Gerald—I loved Montreuil. It was a part of my nature to love, and I did not resist the impulse. You I loved better than all; but I was jealous of each. If my mother caressed you or Gerald—if *you* opened your heart to either, it stung me to the quick. I it was who said to my mother, 'Caress him not, or I shall think you love him better than me.' I it was who widened, from my veriest childhood, the breach between Gerald and yourself. I it was who gave to the childish reproach a venom, and to the childish quarrel a barb. Was this love? Yes, it *was* love; but I could not endure that ye should love one another as ye loved me. It delighted me when one confided to my ear a complaint against the other, and said, 'Aubrey, this blow could not have come from thee!'

"Montreuil early perceived my bias of temper: he might have corrected it, and with ease. I was not evil in disposition; I was insensible of my own vice. Had its malignity been revealed to me, I should have recoiled in horror. Montreuil had a vast power over me; he could mould me at his will. Montreuil, I repeat, might have saved me, and thyself, and a third being, better and purer than either of us was, even in our cradles. Montreuil did not: he had an object to serve, and he sacrificed our whole house to it. He found me one day weeping over a dog that I had killed. 'Why did you destroy it?' he said; and I answered, 'Because it loved Morton better than me!' And the priest said, 'Thou didst right, Aubrey!' Yes, from that time he took advantage of my infirmity, and could rouse or calm all my pas-

sions in proportion as he irritated or soothed it. You know this man's object during the latter period of his residence with us: it was the restoration of the House of Stuart. He was alternately the spy and the agitator in that cause. Among more comprehensive plans for effecting this object was that of securing the heirs to the great wealth and popular name of Sir William Devereux. This was only a minor mesh in the intricate web of his schemes: but it is the character of the man to take exactly the same pains, and pursue the same laborious intrigues, for a small object as for a great one. His first impression, on entering our house, was in favor of Gerald: and I believe he really likes him to this day better than either of us. Partly your sarcasms, partly Gerald's disputes with you, partly my representations—for I was jealous even of the love of Montreuil—prepossessed him against you. He thought too, that Gerald had more talent to serve his purposes than yourself, and more facility in being moulded to them; and he believed our uncle's partiality to you far from being unalienable. I have said that, at the latter period of his residence with us, he was an agent of the exiled cause. At the time I *now* speak of, he had not entered into the great political scheme which engrossed him afterwards. He was merely a restless and aspiring priest, whose whole hope, object, ambition, was the advancement of his order. He knew that whoever inherited, or whoever shared, my uncle's wealth, could, under legitimate regulation, promote *any* end which the heads of that order might select; and he wished therefore to gain the mastery over us all. Intrigue was essentially woven with his genius, and by intrigue only did he ever seek to arrive at any end he had in view.* He soon obtained a mysterious and pervading power over Gerald and myself. Your temper at once irritated him, and made him despair of obtaining an ascendant over one who, though he testified in childhood none of the talents for which he has since been noted, testified, nevertheless, a shrewd, penetrating and sarcastic power of observation and detection. You, therefore, he resolved to leave to the irregularities of your own nature, confident that they would yield him the opportunity of detaching your uncle from you, and ultimately securing to Gerald his estates.

"The trial at school first altered his intentions. He imagined that he then saw in you powers which might be rendered availing to him: he conquered his pride—a great feature in his character—and he resolved to seek your affection. Your subsequent regularity of habits, and success in study, confirmed him in his resolution; and when he learnt, from my uncle's own lips, that the Devereux estates would devolve on you, he thought that it would be easier to secure your affection to him than to divert that affection which my uncle had conceived for you. At this time, I repeat, he had no particular object in view; none, at least, beyond that of obtaining, for the interest of his order, the direction of great wealth and some political influence. Some time after—I know not exactly when, but before we returned to take our permanent abode at Devereux Court—a share in the grand political intrigue which was then in so many branches carried on throughout England, and even Europe, was confided to Montreuil.

"In this I believe he was the servant of his order, rather than immediately of the exiled house; and I have since heard that even at that day he had acquired a great reputation among the professors of the former. You, Morton, he decoyed not into this scheme before he left England: he had not acquired a sufficient influence over you to trust you with the disclosure. To Gerald and myself he was more confidential. Gerald eagerly embraced his projects through a spirit of enterprise—I through a spirit of awe and of religion. RELIGION! Yes, — then, — long after, — now, — when my heart was and is the home of all withering and evil passions, Religion reigned—reigns, over me a despot and a tyrant. Its terrors haunt me at this hour—they people the earth and the air with shapes of ghastly menace! They—Heaven pardon me! what would my madness utter? Madness?—madness? Ay *that* is the real scourge, the real fire, the real torture, the real hell, of this fair earth!

"Montreuil, then, by different pleas, won over Gerald and myself. He left us, but engaged us in constant correspondence. 'Aubrey,' he said, before he departed, and when he saw that I was wounded by his apparent cordiality towards you and Gerald—'Aubrey,' he

* It will be observed that Aubrey frequently repeats former assertions; this is one of the most customary traits of insanity.—Ed.

said, soothing me on this point, 'think not that I trust Gerald or the arrogant Morton as I trust you. *You* have my real heart and my real trust. It is necessary to the execution of this project, so important to the interests of religion, and so agreeable to the will of Heaven, that we should secure all co-operators; but they, your brothers, Aubrey, are the tools of that mighty design—you are its friend.' Thus it was that, at all times when he irritated too sorely the vice of my nature, he flattered it into seconding his views; and thus, instead of conquering my evil passions, he conquered by them. Curses —— No, no, no!—I *will* be calm.

"We returned to Devereux Court, and we grew from boyhood into youth. I loved you then, Morton. Ah! what would I not give now for one pure feeling, such as I felt in your love? Do you remember the day on which you had extorted from my uncle his consent to your leaving us for the pleasures and pomps of London? Do you remember the evening of that day, when I came to seek you, and we sat down on a little mound, and talked over your projects, and you spoke then to me of my devotion, and my purer and colder feelings? Morton, at that very moment my veins burnt with passion!—at that very moment my heart was feeding the vulture fated to live and prey within it for ever! Thrice did I resolve to confide in you, as we then sat together, and thrice did my evil genius forbid it. You seemed, even in your affection to me, so wholly engrossed with your own hopes—you seemed so little to regret leaving me—you stung, so often and so deeply, in our short conference, that feeling which made me desire to monopolize all things in those I loved, that I said inly—'Why should I bare my heart to one who can so little understand it?' And so we turned home, and you dreamt not of that which was then within me, and which was destined to be your curse and mine.

"Not many weeks previous to that night, I had seen one whom to see was to love! Love!—I tell you, Morton, that *that* word is expressive of soft and fond emotions, and there should be another expressive of all that is fierce, and dark, and unrelenting in the human heart!—all that seems most like the deadliest and the blackest hate, and yet is not hate! I saw this being, and from that moment my real nature, which had slept hitherto, awoke! I remember well, it was one evening in the beginning of summer that I first saw her. She sat alone in the little garden beside the cottage door, and I paused, and, unseen, looked over the slight fence that separated us, and fed my eyes with a loveliness that I thought till then, only twilight or the stars could wear! From that evening I came, night after night, to watch her from the same spot; and every time I beheld her, the poison entered deeper and deeper into my system. At length I had an opportunity of being known to her—of speaking to her—of hearing her speak—of touching the ground she had hallowed—of entering the home where she dwelt!

"I must explain; I said that both Gerald and myself corresponded privately with Montreuil—we were both bound over to secrecy with regard to you—and this, my temper, and Gerald's coolness with you, rendered an easy obligation to both;—I say my temper—for I loved to think I had a secret not known to another; and I carried this reserve even to the degree of concealing from Gerald himself the greater part of the correspondence between me and the Abbe. In his correspondence with each of us, Montreuil acted with his usual skill; to Gerald, as the elder in years, the more prone to enterprise, and the manlier in aspect and in character, was allotted whatever object was of real trust or importance. Gerald it was who, under pretence of pursuing his accustomed sports, conferred with the various agents of intrigue who from time to time visited our coast; and to me the Abbe gave words of endearment, and affected the language of more entire trust. 'Whatever,' he would say, 'in our present half mellowed projects, is exposed to danger, but does not promise reward, I entrust to Gerald; hereafter, far higher employment, under far safer and surer auspices, will be yours. We are the heads—be ours the nobler occupation to plan—and let us leave to inferior natures the vain and perilous triumph to execute what we design.'

"All this I readily assented to; for, despite my acquiescence in Montreuil's wishes, I loved not enterprise, or rather I hated whatever roused me from the dreamy and abstracted indolence which was most dear to my temperament. Sometimes, however, with a great show of confidence, Montreuil would request me to

execute some quiet and unimportant commission; and of this nature was one I received while I was thus, unknown even to the object, steeping my soul in the first intoxication of love. The plots then carried on by certain ecclesiastics, I need not say extended, in one linked chain, over the greater part of the continent. Spain, in especial, was the theatre of these intrigues; and among the tools employed in executing them were some, who, though banished from that country, still, by the rank they had held in it, carried a certain importance in their very names. Foremost of these was the father of the woman I loved—and foremost, in whatever promised occupation to a restless mind, he was always certain to be.

"Montreuil now commissioned me to seek out a certain Barnard (an underling in those secret practices or services, for which he afterwards suffered, and who was then in that part of the country), and to communicate to him some messages, of which he was to be the bearer to this Spaniard. A thought flashed upon me—Montreuil's letter mentioned, accidentally, that the Spaniard had never hitherto seen Barnard:—could I not personate the latter—deliver the messages myself, and thus win that introduction to the daughter which I so burningly desired, and which, from the close reserve of the father's habits, I might not otherwise effect? The plan was open to two objections: one, that I was known personally in the town in the environs of which the Spaniard lived, and he might therefore very soon discover who I really was; the other, that I was not in possession of all the information which Barnard might possess, and which the Spaniard might wish to learn; but these objections had not much weight with me. To the first, I said inly, 'I will oppose the most constant caution; I will go always on foot, and alone—I will never be seen in the town itself—and even should the Spaniard, who seems rarely to stir abroad, and who, possibly, does not speak our language—even should he learn, by accident, that Barnard is only another name for Aubrey Devereux, it will not be before I have gained my object; nor, perhaps, before the time when I myself may wish to acknowledge my identity.' To the second objection I saw a yet more ready answer. 'I will acquaint Montreuil at once,' I said, 'with my intention; I will claim his connivance as a proof of his confidence, and as an essay of my own genius of intrigue.' I did so; the priest, perhaps delighted to involve me so deeply, and to find me so ardent in his project, consented. Fortunately, as I before said, Barnard was an underling — young — unknown—and obscure. My youth, therefore, was not so great a foe to my assumed disguise as it might otherwise have been. Montreuil supplied all requisite information. I tried (for the first time, with a beating heart and a tremulous voice) the imposition; it succeeded—I continued it. Yes, Morton, yes!—pour forth upon me your bitterest execration—in me—in your brother—in the brothor so dear to you—in the brother whom you imagined so passionless—so pure—so sinless—behold that Barnard—the lover—the idolatrous lover—the foe—the deadly foe—of Isora d'Alvarez!"

Here the manuscript was defaced for some pages by incoherent and meaningless ravings. It seemed as if one of his dark fits of frenzy had at that time come over the writer. At length, in a more firm and clear character than that immediately preceding it, the manuscript continued as follows:

"I loved her, but even then it was with a fierce and ominous love—(ominous of what it became). Often in the still evenings, when we stood together watching the sun set—when my tongue trembled but did not dare to speak—when all soft and sweet thoughts filled the heart and glistened in the eye of that most sensitive and fairy being—when my own brow, perhaps, seemed to reflect the same emotions—feelings, which I even shuddered to conceive, raged within me. Had we stood together, in those moments, upon the brink of a precipice, I could have wound my arms around her, and leapt with her into the abyss. Every thing but one nursed my passion; nature—solitude—early dreams—all kindled and fed that fire: Religion only combated it; I knew it was a crime to love any of earth's creatures as I loved. I used the scourge and the fast *—I wept hot—burning tears—I prayed, and the intensity of my prayer

* I need not point out to the Novel-reader how completely the character of Aubrey has been stolen in a certain celebrated French Romance—But the writer I allude to is not so unmerciful as M. de Balzac, who has pillaged scenes in the Disowned, with a most gratifying politeness.

appalled even myself, as it rose from my maddened heart, in the depth and stillness of the lone night: but the flame burnt higher and more scorchingly from the opposition; nay, it was the very knowledge that my love was criminal that made it assume so fearful and dark a shape. 'Thou art the cause of my downfall from Heaven!' I muttered, when I looked upon Isora's calm face—thou feelest it not, and I could destroy thee and myself—myself the criminal—thee the cause of the crime!'

"It must have been that my eyes betrayed my feelings, that Isora loved me not—that she shrunk from me even at the first—why else should I not have called forth the same sentiments which she gave to you? Was not my form cast in a mould as fair as yours?—did not my voice whisper in as sweet a tone?—did I not love her with as wild a love? Why should she not have loved me? I was the first whom she beheld—she would—ay, perhaps she would have loved me, if you had not come and marred all. Curse yourself, then, that you were my rival!—curse yourself that you made my heart as a furnace, and smote my brain with frenzy—curse—O, sweet Virgin, forgive me!—I know not—I know not what my tongue utters or my hand traces!

"You came, then, Morton, you came—you knew her—you loved her—she loved you. I learned that you had gained admittance to the cottage, and the moment I learned it, I looked on Isora, and felt my fate, as by intuition: I saw at once that she was prepared to love you—I saw the very moment when that love kindled from conception into form—I saw—and at that moment my eyes reeled and my ears rung as with the sound of a rushing sea, and I thought I felt a chord snap within my brain, which has never been united again.

"Once only, after your introduction to the cottage, did I think of confiding to you my love and rivalship; you remember one night when we met by the castle cave, and when your kindness touched and softened me, despite of myself. The day after that night I sought you, with the intention of communicating to you all; and while I was yet struggling with my embarrassment, and the suffocating tide of my emotions, you premeditated me, by giving me *your* confidence. Engrossed with your own feelings, you were not observant of mine; and as you dwelt and dilated upon your love for Isora, all emotions, save those of agony and of fury, vanished from my breast. I did not answer you then at any length, for I was too agitated to trust to prolix speech; but by the next day I had recovered myself, and I resolved, as far as I was able, to play the hypocrite. 'He cannot love her as I do!' I said; 'perhaps I may, without disclosure of my rivalship, and without sin in the attempt, detach her from my reason.' Fraught with this idea, I collected myself—sought you—remonstrated with you—represented the worldly folly of your love, and uttered all that prudence preaches—in vain, where it preaches against passion!

"Let me be brief. I saw that I made no impression on you—I stifled my wrath—I continued to visit and watch Isora. I timed my opportunities well—my constant knowledge of your motions allowed me to do that; besides, I represented to the Spaniard the necessity, through political motives, of concealing myself from you; hence, we never encountered each other. One evening, Alvarez had gone out to meet one of his countrymen and confederates. I found Isora alone, in the most sequestered part of the garden,—her loveliness, and her exceeding gentleness of manner, melted me. For the first time audibly, my heart spoke out, and I told her of my idolatry. Idolatry!—ay, *that* is the only word, since it signifies both worship and guilt! She heard me timidly, gently, coldly. She spoke—and I found confirmed, from her own lips, what my reason had before told me—that there was no hope for me. The iron that entered, also roused, my heart. 'Enough!' I cried fiercely, 'you love this Morton Devereux, and for him I am scorned.' Isora blushed and trembled, and all my senses fled from me. I scarcely know in what words my rage and my despair clothed themselves; but I know that I divulged myself to her—I know that I told her I was the brother—the rival—the enemy of the man she loved,—I know that I uttered the fiercest and the wildest menaces and execrations—I know that my vehemence so overpowered and terrified her that her mind was scarcely less clouded—less lost, rather, than my own. At that moment, the sound of your horse's hoofs was heard; Isora's eye brightened, and her mien grew firm. 'He comes,' she said, 'and he will protect me!'—'Hark!' I said, sinking my voice, and, as my drawn sword

flashed in one hand, the other grasped her arm with a savage force—'hark, woman!' I said—and an oath of the blackest fury accompanied my threats—'swear that you will never divulge to Morton Devereux who is his real rival—that you will never declare to him nor to any one else, that the false Barnard and the true Aubrey Devereux are the same—swear this, or I swear (and I repeated, with a solemn vehemence, that dread oath), that I will stay here—that I will confront my rival—that, the moment he beholds me, I will plunge this sword in his bosom—and that, before I perish myself, I will hasten to the town, and will utter there a secret which will send your father to the gallows—now, your choice?'

"Morton, you have often praised, my uncle has often jested at, the womanish softness of my face. There have been moments when I have seen that face in the glass, and known it not, but started in wild affright, and fancied that I beheld a demon; perhaps in that moment this change was over it. Slowly Isora gazed upon me—slowly blanched into the hues of death grew her cheek and lip—slowly that lip uttered the oath I enjoined. I released my gripe, and she fell to the earth, sudden and stunned as if struck by lightning. I stayed not to look on what I had done—I heard your step advance—I fled by a path that led from the garden to the beach—and I reached my home without retaining a single recollection of the space I had traversed to attain it.

"Despite the night I passed—a night which I will leave you to imagine—I rose the next morning with a burning interest to learn from you what had passed after my flight, and with a power, peculiar to the stormiest passions, of an outward composure while I listened to the recital. I saw that I was safe, and I heard, with a joy so raptuorous, that I question whether even Isora's assent to *my* love would have given me an equal transport, that, she had rejected you. I uttered some advice to you common-place enough—it displeased you, and we separated.

"That evening, to my surprise, I was privately visited by Montreuil. He had some designs in hand which brought him from France into the neighborhood, but which made him desirous of concealment. He soon drew from me my secret; it is marvellous, indeed, what power he had of penetrating, ruling, moulding my feelings and my thoughts. He wished, at that time, a communication to be made and a letter to be given, to Alvarez. I could not execute this commission personally, for you had informed me of your intention of watching if you could not discover or meet with Barnard, and I knew you were absent from home on that very purpose. Nor was Montreuil himself desirous of incurring the risk of being seen by you—you over whom, sooner or later, he then trusted to obtain a power equal to that which he held over your brothers. Gerald then was chosen to execute the commission. He did so—he met Alvarez for the first and the only time on the beach, by the town of ——. You saw him, and imagined you beheld the real Barnard.

"But I anticipate—for you did not inform me of that occurrence, nor the inference you drew from it, till afterwards. You returned, however, after witnessing that meeting, and for two days your passions (passions which, intense and fierce as mine, show that, under similar circumstances, you might have been equally guilty) terminated in fever. You were confined to your bed for three or four days; meanwhile I took advantage of the event.—Montreuil suggested a plan which I readily embraced. I sought the Spaniard, and told him in confidence that you were a suitor—but a suitor upon the most dishonorable terms—to his daughter. I told him, moreover, that you had detected his schemes, and in order to deprive Isora of protection, and abate any obstacles resulting from her pride, to betray him to the government. I told him that his best and most prudent, nay, his only, chance of safety for Isora and himself was to leave his present home, and to take refuge in the vast mazes of the metropolis. I told him not to betray to you his knowledge of your criminal intentions, lest it might needlessly exasperate you. I furnished him wherewithal to repay you the sum which you had lent him, and by which you had commenced his acquaintance: and I dictated to him the very terms of the note in which the sum was to be enclosed. After this I felt happy. You were separated from Isora—she might forget you—you might forget her. I was possessed of the secret of her father's present retreat—I might seek it at my pleasure, and ultimately—so hope whispered—prosper in my love.

"Some time afterwards you mentioned your

suspicions of Gerald; I did not corroborate, but I did not seek to destroy, them. 'They already hate each other,' I said: 'can the hate be greater? meanwhile, let it divert suspicion from me!' Gerald knew of the agency of the real Barnard, though he did not know that I had assumed the name of that person. When you taxed him with his knowledge of the man, he was naturally confused. You interpreted that confusion into the fact of being your rival, while in truth it arose from his belief that you had possessed yourself of his political schemes. Montreuil, who had lurked chiefly in the islet opposite 'the Castle Cave,' had returned to France on the same day that Alvarez repaired to London. Previous to this, we had held some conferences together upon my love. At first he had opposed and reasoned with it, but, startled and astonished by the intensity with which it possessed me, he gave way to my vehemence at last. I have said that I had adopted his advice in one instance. The fact of having received his advice—the advice of one so pious—so free from human passion—so devoted to one object, which appeared to him, the cause of Religion—advice, too, in a love so fiery and overwhelming;—that fact made me think myself less criminal than I had done before. He advised me yet further. 'Do not seek Isora,' he said, 'till some time has elapsed—till her new-born love for your brother has died away—till the impression of fear you have caused in her is somewhat effaced—till time and absence too have done their work in the mind of Morton, and you will no longer have for your rival, one who is not only a brother, but a man of a fierce, resolute, and unrelenting temper."

"I yielded to this advice—partly because it promised so fair; partly because I was not systematically vicious, and I wished, if possible, to do away with our rivalship; and principally because I knew, in the meanwhile, that if I was deprived of her presence, so also were you; and jealousy with me was a far more intolerable and engrossing passion than the very love from which it sprung. So time passed on—you affected to have conquered your attachment; you affected to take pleasure in levity, and the idlest pursuits of worldly men. I saw deeper into your heart. For the moment I entertained the passion of love in my own breast, my eyes became gifted with a second vision to penetrate the most mysterious and hoarded secrets in the love of others.

"Two circumstances of importance happened before you left Devereux Court for London; the one was the introduction to your service of Jean Desmarais, the second was your breach with Montreuil. I speak now of the first. A very early friend did the priest possess, born in the same village as himself, and in the same rank of life; he had received a good education, and possessed natural genius. At a time when, from some fraud in a situation of trust which he had held in a French nobleman's family, he was in destitute and desperate circumstances, it occurred to Montreuil to provide for him by placing him in our family. Some accidental and frivolous remark of yours, which I had repeated in my correspondence with Montreuil, as illustrative of your manner, and your affected pursuits at that time, presented an opportunity to a plan before conceived. Desmarais came to England in a smuggler's vessel, presented himself to you as a servant, and was accepted. In this plan Montreuil had two views—first, that of securing Desmarais a place in England, tolerably profitable to himself, and convenient for any plot or scheme which Montreuil might require of him in this country; secondly, that of setting a perpetual and most adroit spy upon all your motions.

"As to the second occurrence to which I have referred, viz., your breach with Montreuil——"

Here Aubrey, with the same terrible distinctness which had characterized his previous details, and which shed a double horror over the contrast of the darker and more frantic passages in the manuscript, related what the reader will remember Oswald had narrated before, respecting the letter he had brought from Madame de Balzac. It seems that Montreuil's abrupt appearance in the hall had been caused by Desmarais, who had recognized Oswald, on his dismounting at the gate, and had previously known that he was in the employment of the Jansenistical *intriguante*, Madame de Balzac.

Aubrey proceeded then to say that Montreuil, invested with far more direct authority and power than he had been hitherto, in the projects of that wise order whose doctrines he had so darkly perverted, repaired to London; and that, soon after my departure for the same

place, Gerald and Aubrey left Devereux Court in company with each other; but Gerald, whom very trifling things diverted from any project, however important, returned to Devereux Court, to accomplish the prosecution of some rustic *amour*, without even reaching London. Aubrey, on the contrary, had proceeded to the metropolis, sought the suburb in which Alvarez lived, procured, in order to avoid any probable chance of meeting me, a lodging in the same obscure quarter, and had renewed his suit to Isora. The reader is already in possession of the ill success which attended it. Aubrey had at last confessed his real name to the father. The Spaniard was dazzled by the prospect of so honorable an alliance for his daughter. From both came Isora's persecution, but in both was it resisted. Passing over passages in the manuscript of the most stormy incoherence and the most gloomy passion, I come to what follows—

"I learned then, from Desmarais, that you had taken away her and the dying father; that you had placed them in a safe and honorable home. That man, so implicitly the creature of Montreuil, or rather of his own interest, with which Montreuil was identified, was easily induced to betray you also to me—me whom he imagined, moreover, utterly the tool of the priest, and of whose torturing interest, in this peculiar disclosure, he was not at that time aware. I visited Isora in her new abode, and again and again she trembled beneath my rage. Then, for the second time, I attempted force. Ha! ha! Morton! I think I see you now!—I think I hear your muttered curse!—Curse on! When you read this I shall be beyond your vengeance—beyond human power. And yet I think if I were mere clay—if I were the mere senseless heap of ashes that the grave covers—if I were not the thing that must live for ever and for ever, far away in unimagined worlds, where nought that has earth's life can come—I should tremble beneath the sod as your foot pressed, and your execration rung over it. A second time I attempted force—a second time I was repulsed by the same means—by a woman's hand and a woman's dagger. But I knew that I had one hold over Isora from which, while she loved you, I could never be driven: I knew that by threatening your *life*, I could command her will, and terrify her into compliance with my own. I made her reiterate her vow of concealment; and I discovered, by some words dropping from her fear, that she believed you already suspected me, and had been withheld, by her entreaties, from seeking me out. I questioned her more, and soon perceived that it was (as indeed I knew before) Gerald whom you suspected, not me; but I did not tell this to Isora. I suffered her to cherish a mistake profitable to my disguise; but I saw at once that it might betray me, if you ever met and conferred at length with Gerald upon this point; and I exacted from Isora a pledge that she would effectually and for ever bind you not to breathe a single suspicion to him. When I had left the room, I returned once more to warn her against uniting herself with you. Wretch, selfish, accursed wretch that you were, why did you suffer her to transgress that warning?

"I fled from the house, as a fiend flies from a being whom he has possessed. I returned at night to look up at the window, and linger by the door, and keep watch beside the home which held Isora. Such, in her former abode, had been my nightly wont. I had no evil thought nor foul intent in this customary vigil—no, not one! Strangely enough, with the tempestuous and overwhelming emotions which constituted the greater part of my love, was mingled, — though subdued and latent — a stream of the softest, yea, I might add, almost of the holiest tenderness. Often after one of those outpourings of rage, and menace, and despair, I would fly to some quiet spot, and weep, till all the hardness of my heart was wept away. And often in those nightly vigils I would pause by the door and murmur, 'This shelter, denied not to the beggar and the beggar's child, this would you deny to me, if you could dream that I was so near you. And yet, had you loved me, instead of lavishing upon me all your hatred and your contempt—had you loved me, I would have served and worshipped you as man knows not worship or service. You shudder at my vehemence now—I could not then have breathed a whisper to wound you. You tremble now at the fierceness of my breast—you would then rather have marvelled at its softness.'

"I was already at my old watch when you encountered me—you addressed me, I answered not—you approached me, and I fled. Fled--

there—there was the shame, and the sting of my sentiments towards you. I am not naturally afraid of danger, though my nerves are sometimes weak, and have sometimes shrunk from it. I have known something of peril in late years, when my frame has been bowed and broken—peril by storms at rea, and the knives of robbers upon land—and I have looked upon it with a quiet eye. But you, Morton Devereux, you I always feared. I had seen from your childhood others, whose nature was far stronger than mine, yield and recoil at yours—I had seen the giant and bold strength of Gerald quail before your bent brow—I had seen even the hardy pride of Montreuil baffled by your curled lip, and the stern sarcasm of your glance—I had seen you, too, in your wild moments of ungoverned rage, and I knew that if earth held one whose passions were fiercer than my own, it was you. But your passions were sustained even in their fiercest excess—your passions were the mere weapons of your mind—my passions were the torturers and the tyrants of mine. Your passions seconded your will—mine blinded and overwhelmed it. From my infancy, even while I loved you most, you awed me; and years, in deepening the impression, had made it indelible. I could not confront the thought of your knowing all, and of meeting you after that knowledge. And this fear, while it unnerved me at some moments, at others only maddened my ferocity the more by the stings of shame and self-contempt.

"I fled from you—you pursued—you gained upon me—you remember now how I was preserved. I dashed through the inebriated revellers who obstructed your path, and reached my own lodging, which was close at hand; for the same day on which I learned Isora's change of residence I changed my own in order to be near it. Did I feel joy for my escape? No—I could have gnawed the very flesh from my bones in the agony of my shame. 'I could brave,' I said, 'I could threat—I could offer violence to the woman who rejected me, and yet I could not face the rival for whom I am scorned!' At that moment a resolution flashed across my mind, exactly as if a train of living fire had been driven before it. Morton, I resolved to murder you, and in that very hour! A pistol lay on my table—I took it, concealed it about my person, and repaired to the shelter of a large portico, beside which I knew that you must pass to your own home in the same street. Scarcely three minutes had elapsed between the reaching my house and the leaving it on this errand. I knew, for I had heard swords clash, that you would be detained some time in the street by the rioters—I thought it probable also that you might still continue the search for me; and I knew even that, had you hastened at once to your home, you could scarcely have reached it before I reached my shelter. I hurried on—I arrived at the spot—I screened myself and awaited your coming. You came, borne in the arms of two men—others followed in the rear—I saw your face destitute of the hue and aspect of life, and your clothes streaming with blood. I was horror-stricken. I joined the crowd—I learnt that you had been stabbed, and it was feared mortally.

"I did not return home—no, I went into the fields, and lay out all night, and lifted up my heart to God, and wept aloud, and peace fell upon me—at least, what was peace compared to the tempestuous darkness which had before reigned in my breast. The sight of you, bleeding and insensible—you, against whom I had harbored a fratricide's purpose—had stricken, as it were, the weapon from my hand, and the madness from my mind. I shuddered at what I had escaped—I blessed God for my deliverance—and with the gratitude and the awe came repentance—and repentance brought a resolution to fly, since I could not wrestle with my mighty and dread temptation:—the moment that resolution was formed, it was as if an incubus were taken from my breast. Even the next morning I did not return home—my anxiety for you was such that I forgot all caution—I went to your house myself—I saw one of your servants to whom I was personally unknown. I inquired respecting you, and learnt that your wound had not been mortal, and that the servant had overheard one of the medical attendants say you were not even in danger.

"At this news I felt the serpent stir again within me, but I resolved to crush it at the first—I would not even expose myself to the temptation of passing by Isora's house—I went straight in search of my horse—I mounted, and fled resolutely from the scene of my soul's peril. 'I will go,' I said, 'to the home of our

childhood—I will surround myself by the mute tokens of the early love which my brother bore me—I will think—while penance and prayer cleanse my soul from its black guilt—I will think that I am also making a sacrifice to that brother.'

"I returned then to Devereux Court, and I resolved to forego all hope—all persecution—of Isora! My brother—my brother, my heart yearns to you at this moment, even though years and distance, and above all, my own crimes, place a gulf between us which I may never pass—it yearns to you when I think of those quiet shades, and the scenes where, pure and unsullied, we wandered together when life was all verdure and freshness, and we dreamt not of what was to come! If even now my heart yearns to you, Morton, when I think of that home and those days, believe that it had some softness and some mercy for you then. Yes, I repeat, I resolved to subdue my own emotions, and interpose no longer between Isora and yourself. Full of this determination, and utterly melted towards you, I wrote you a long letter; such as we would have written to each other in our first youth. Two days after that letter all my new purposes were swept away, and the whole soil of evil thoughts which they had covered, not destroyed, rose again as the tide flowed from it, black and rugged as before.

"The very night on which I had writ that letter, came Montreuil secretly to my chamber. He had been accustomed to visit Gerald by stealth, and at sudden moments; and there was something almost supernatural in the manner in which he seemed to pass from place to place, unmolested and unseen. He had now conceived a villanous project; and he had visited Devereux Court in order to ascertain the likelihood of its success; he there found that it was necessary to involve me in his scheme. My uncle's physician had said privately that Sir William could not live many months longer. Either from Gerald, or my mother, Montreuil learned this fact; and he was resolved, if possible, that the family estates should not glide from all chance of his influence over them into your possession. Montreuil was literally as poor as the rigid law of his order enjoins its disciples to be; all his schemes required the disposal of large sums, and in no private source could he hope for such pecuniary power as he was likely to find in the coffers of any member of our family—yourself and Uncle's. It was this man's boast to want, and yet to command, all things; and he was now determined that if any craft, resolution, or guilt, could occasion the transfer of my uncle's wealth from you to Gerald, or to myself, it should not be wanting.

"Now, then, he found the advantage of the dissensions with each other, which he had either sown or mellowed in our breasts. He came to turn those wrathful thoughts which, when he last saw me, I had expressed towards you, to the favor and success of his design. He found my mind strangely altered, but he affected to applaud the change. He questioned me respecting my uncle's health, and I told him what had really occurred, viz., that my uncle had, on the preceding day, read over to me some part of a will which he had just made, and in which the vast bulk of his property was bequeathed to you. At this news Montreuil must have perceived at once the necessity of winning my consent to his project; for, since I had seen the actual testament, no fraudulent transfer of the property therein bequeathed could take place without my knowledge that some fraud had been recurred to. Montreuil knew me well—he knew that avarice, that pleasure, that ambition, were powerless words with me, producing no effect and affording no temptation; but he knew that passion, jealousy, spiritual terrors, were the springs that moved every part and nerve of my moral being. The two former then he now put into action—the last he held back in reserve. He spoke to me no further upon the subject he had then at heart; not a word further on the disposition of the estates—he spoke to me only of Isora and of you; he aroused, by hint and insinuation, the new sleep into which all those emotions—the furies of the heart—had been for a moment lulled. He told me he had lately seen Isora—he dwelt glowingly on her beauty—he commended my heroism in resigning her to a brother whose love for her was little in comparison to mine—who had, in reality, never loved *me*—whose jests and irony had been levelled no less at myself than at others. He painted your person and your mind, in contrast to my own, in colors so covertly depreciating as to irritate, more and more, that vanity with which jealousy is so woven, and from which, perhaps (a Titan

son of so feeble a parent), it is born. He hung lingeringly over all the treasure that you would enjoy, and that I—I, the first discoverer, had so nobly, and so generously relinquished.

"'Relinquished!' I cried, 'no, I was driven from it, I left it not while a hope of possessing it remained.' The priest affected astonishment. 'How! was I sure of that? I had, it is true, wooed Isora; but would she, even if she had felt no preference for Morton, would she have surrendered the heir to a princely wealth for the humble love of the younger son? I did not know women; with them all love was either wantonness, custom, or pride—it was the last principle that swayed Isora. Had I sought to enlist it on my side? Not at all. Again, I had only striven to detach Isora from Morton; had I ever attempted the much easier task of detaching Morton from Isora? No, never;' and Montreuil repeated his panegyric on my generous surrender of my rights. I interrupted him; 'I had not surrendered—I never would surrender while a hope remained. But, where was that hope, and how was it to be realized?' After much artful prelude, the priest explained. He proposed to use every means to array against your union with Isora, all motives of ambition, interest, and aggrandizement. 'I know Morton's character,' said he, 'to its very depths. His chief virtue is honor — his chief principle is ambition. He will not attempt to win this girl otherwise than by marriage, for the very reason that would induce most men to attempt it, viz., her unfriended state, her poverty, her confidence in him, and her love, or that semblance of love, which he believes to be the passion itself. This virtue—I call it so, though it is none, for there is no virtue out of religion—this virtue, then, will place before him only two plans of conduct, either to marry her or to forsake her. Now, then, if we can bring his ambition, that great lever of his conduct, in opposition to the first alternative, only the last remains; I say that we *can* employ that engine in your behalf—leave it to me, and I will do so. Then, Aubrey, in the moment of her pique, her resentment, her outraged vanity, at being thus left, you shall appear; not as you have hitherto done, in menace and terror, but soft, subdued, with looks all love—with vows all penitence—vindicating all your past vehemence, by the excess of your passion, and promising all future tenderness by the influence of the same motive, the motive which to a woman pardons every error, and hallows every crime. Then will she contrast your love with your brother's—then will the scale fall from her eyes—then will she see what hitherto she has been blinded to, that your brother, to yourself, is a satyr to Hyperion—then will she blush and falter, and hide her cheek in your bosom.'—'Hold, hold!' I cried; 'do with me what you will, counsel, and I will act!'"

Here again the manuscript was defaced by a sudden burst of execration upon Montreuil, followed by ravings that gradually blackened into the most gloomy and incoherent outpourings of madness; at length, the history proceeded.

"You wrote to ask me to sound our uncle on the subject of your intended marriage. Montreuil drew up my answer, and I constrained myself, despite my revived hatred to you, to transcribe its expressions of affection. My uncle wrote to you also; and we strengthened his dislike to the step you had proposed, by hints from myself disrespectful to Isora, and an anonymous communication dated from London, and to the same purport. All this while I knew not that Isora had been in your house; your answer to my letter seemed to imply that you would not disobey my uncle. Montreuil, who was still lurking in the neighborhood, and who at night privately met or sought me, affected exultation at the incipient success of his advice. He pretended to receive perpetual intelligence of your motions and conduct, and he informed me now that Isora had come to your house on hearing of your wound; that you had not (agreeably, Montreuil added to his view of your character) taken advantage of her indiscretion; that immediately on receiving your uncle's and my own letters, you had separated yourself from her; and that, though you still visited her, it was apparently with a view of breaking off all connection by gradual and gentle steps; at all events you had taken no measures towards marriage. 'Now, then,' said Montreuil, 'for one finishing stroke, and the prize is yours. Your uncle cannot, you find, live long: could he but be persuaded to leave his property to

Gerald or to you, with only a trifling legacy (comparatively speaking) to Morton, that worldly-minded and enterprising person would be utterly prevented from marrying a penniless and unknown foreigner. Nothing but his own high prospects, so utterly above the necessity of fortune in a wife, can excuse such a measure now, even to his own mind; if, therefore, we can effect this transfer of property, and in the meanwhile prevent Morton from marrying, your rival is gone for ever, and with his brilliant advantages of wealth will also vanish his merits in the eyes of Isora. Do not be startled at this thought; there is no crime in it; I, your confessor, your tutor, the servant of the church, am the last person to counsel, to hint, even, at what is criminal; but the end sanctifies all means. By transferring this vast property, you do not only ensure your object, but you advance the great cause of Kings, the Church, and of the Religion which presides over both. Wealth, in Morton's possession, will be useless to this cause, perhaps pernicious: in your hands, or in Gerald's, it will be of inestimable service. Wealth produced from the public should be applied to the uses of the public, yea, even though a petty injury to one individual be the price.'

"Thus, and in this manner, did Montreuil prepare my mind for the step he meditated; but I was not yet ripe for it. So inconsistant is guilt, that I could commit murder—wrong—almost all villany that passion dictated, but I was struck aghast by the thought of fraud. Montreuil perceived that I was not yet wholly his, and his next plan was to remove me from a spot where I might check his measures. He persuaded me to travel for a few weeks. 'On your return,' said he, 'consider Isora yours; meanwhile, let change of scene beguile suspense.' I was passive in his hands, and I went whither he directed.

"Let me be brief here on the black fraud that ensued. Among the other arts of Jean Desmarais, was that of copying exactly any handwriting. He was then in London, in your service. Montreuil sent for him to come to the neighborhood of Devereux Court. Meanwhile, the priest had procured from the notary who had drawn up, and who now possessed, the will of my unsuspecting uncle, that document. The notary had been long known to, and sometimes politically employed by Montreuil, for he was half brother to that Oswald, whom I have before mentioned as the early comrade of the priest and Desmarais. This circumstance, it is probable, first induced Montreuil to contemplate the plan of a substituted will. Before Desmarais arrived, in order to copy those parts of the will which my uncle's humor had led him to write in his own hand, you, alarmed by a letter from my uncle, came to the Court, and on the same day Sir William (taken ill the preceding evening) died. Between that day and the one on which the funeral occurred, the will was copied by Desmarais; only Gerald's name was substituted for yours, and the forty thousand pounds left to him—a sum equal to that bestowed on myself—was cut down into a legacy of twenty thousand pounds to you. Less than this, Montreuil dared not insert as the bequest to you; and it is possible that the same regard to probabilities prevented all mention of himself in the substituted will. This was all the alteration made. My uncle's writing was copied exactly; and, save the departure from his apparent intentions in your favor, I believe not a particle in the effected fraud was calculated to excite suspicion. Immediately on the reading of the will, Montreuil repaired to me, and confessed what had taken place.

"'Aubrey,' he said, 'I have done this for your sake partly; but I have had a much higher end in view than even your happiness, or my affectionate wishes to promote it. I live solely for one object—the aggrandizement of that holy order to which I belong; the schemes of that order are devoted only to the interests of Heaven, and by serving them, I serve Heaven itself. Aubrey, child of my adoption and of my earthly hopes, those schemes require carnal instruments, and work, even through Mammon, unto the goal of righteousness. What I have done, is just before God and man. I have wrested a weapon from the hand of an enemy, and placed it in the hand of an ally. I have not touched one atom of this wealth, though with the same ease with which I have transferred it from Morton to Gerald, I might have made my own private fortune. I have not touched one atom of it; nor for you, whom I love more than any living being, have I done what my heart dictated. I might have caused the inheritance to pass to you, I have not done so. Why? Because, then, I should have consulted a selfish desire at the

expense of the interests of mankind. Gerald is fitter to be the tool those interests require than you are. Gerald I have made that tool. You, too, I have spared the pangs which your conscience, so peculiarly, so morbidly acute, might suffer at being selected as the instrument of a seeming wrong to Morton. All required of you is silence. If your wants ever ask more than your legacy, you have, as I have, a claim to that wealth which your pleasure allows Gerald to possess. Meanwhile, let us secure to you that treasure dearer to you than gold.'

"If Montreuil did not quite blind me by speeches of this nature, my engrossing, absorbing passion required little to make it cling to any hope of its fruition. I assented, therefore, though not without many previous struggles, to Montreuil's project, or rather to its concealment; nay, I wrote some time after, at his desire, and his dictation, a letter to you, stating feigned reasons for my uncle's alteration of former intentions, and exonerating Gerald from all connivance in that alteration, or abetment in the fraud you professed that it was your open belief had been committed. This was due to Gerald; for at that time, and for aught I know, at the present, he was perfectly unconscious by what means he had attained his fortune; he believed that your love for Isora had given my uncle offence, and hence your disinheritance; and Montreuil took effectual care to exasperate him against you, by dwelling on the malice which your suspicions and your proceedings against him so glaringly testified. Whether Montreuil really thought you would give over all intention of marrying Isora upon your reverse of fortune, which is likely enough, from his estimate of your character, or whether he only wished by any means, to obtain my acquiescence in a measure important to his views, I know not, but he never left me, nor ever ceased to sustain my fevered and unhallowed hopes, from the hour in which he first communicated to me the fraudulent substitution of the will, till we repaired together to London. This we did not do so long as he could detain me in the country, by assurances that I should ruin all by appearing before Isora until you had entirely deserted her.

"Morton, hitherto I have written as if my veins were filled with water, instead of the raging fire that flows through them until it reaches my brain, and there it stops, and eats away all things—even memory, that once seemed eternal! Now I feel as I approach the consummation of—Ha—of what—ay, of what? Brother, did you ever, when you thought yourself quite alone—at night—not a breath stirring—did you ever raise your eyes, and see exactly opposite to you, a devil!—a dread thing, that moves not, speaks not, but glares upon you with a fixed, dead, unrelenting eye?—that thing is before me now, and witnesses every word I write. But it deters me not! no, nor terrifies me. I have said that I would fulfil this task, and I have nearly done it; though at times the gray cavern yawned, and I saw its rugged walls stretch—stretch away, on either side, until they reached hell; and there I beheld—but I will not tell you, till we meet there! Now I am calm again—read on.

"We could not discover Isora, nor her home; perhaps the priest took care that it should be so; for, at that time, what with his devilish whispers and my own heart, I often scarcely knew what I was, or what I desired; and I sat for hours and gazed upon the air, and it seemed so soft and still that I longed to make an opening in my forehead that it might enter there, and so cool and quiet the dull, throbbing, scorching anguish that lay like molten lead in my brain; at length we found the house. 'To-morrow,' said the Abbe, and he shed tears over me—for there were times when that hard man did feel;—'to-morrow, my child, thou shalt see her—but be soft and calm.' The morrow came, but Montreuil was pale, paler than I had ever seen him, and he gazed upon me and said, 'Not to-day, son, not to-day; she has gone out, and will not return till night-fall.' My brother, the evening came, and with it came Desmarais; he came in terror and alarm. 'The villain Oswald,' he said, 'has betrayed all;' he drew me aside and told me so. 'Hark-ye, Jean,' he whispered, 'harkye—your master has my brother's written confession, and the real will; but I have provided for your safety, and if he pleases it, for Montreuil's. The packet is not to be opened till the seventh day—fly before then.' 'But I know,' added Desmarais, 'where the packet is placed;' and he took Montreuil aside, and for awhile I heard not what they said; but I did overhear Desmarais at last, and I learnt that it was your *bridal night.*

"What felt I then? The same tempestuous fury—the same whirlwind and storm of heart that I had felt before, at the mere anticipation of such an event? No; I felt a bright ray of joy flash through me. Yes, joy; but it was that joy which a conquerer feels when he knows his mortal foe is in his power, and when he dooms that enemy to death. 'They shall perish—and on this night,' I said inly. 'I have sworn it—I swore to Isora that the bridal couch should be stained with blood, and I will keep the oath!' I approached the pair—they were discussing the means for obtaining the packet. Montreuil urged Desmarais to purloin it from the place where you had deposited it, and then to abscond; but to this plan Desmarais was vehemently opposed. He insisted that there would be no possible chance of his escape from a search so scrutinizing as that which would necessarily ensue, and he was evidently resolved not *alone* to incur the danger of the *theft*. 'The Count,' said he, 'saw that I was present when he put away the packet. Suspicion will fall solely on me. Whither should I fly? No—I will serve you with my talents, but not with my life.' 'Wretch!' said Montreuil, 'if that packet is opened, thy life is already gone.' —'Yes,' said Desmarais; 'but we may yet purloin the papers, and throw the guilt upon some other quarter. What if I admit you when the Count is abroad? What if you steal the packet, and carry away other articles of more seeming value? What, too, if you wound *me* in the arm or the breast, and I coin some terrible tale of robbers, and of my resistance, could we not manage then to throw suspicion upon common housebreakers—nay, could we not throw it upon Oswald himself? Let us silence that traitor by death, and who shall contradict our tale? No danger shall attend this plan. I will give you the key of the escritoire—the theft will not be the work of a moment.' Montreuil at first demurred to this proposal, but Desmarais was, I repeat, resolved not to incur the danger of the theft alone; the stake was great, and it was not Montreuil's nature to shrink from peril, when once it became necessary to confront it. 'Be it so,' he said, at last, 'though the scheme is full of difficulty and of danger: be it so. We have not a day to lose. To-morrow the count will place the document in some place of greater safety, and unknown to us—the deed shall be done to-night. Procure the key of the escritoire—admit me this night—I will steal disguised into the chamber—I will commit the act from which you, who alone could commit it with safety, shrink. Instruct me exactly as to the place where the articles you speak of are placed: I will abstract them also. See, that if the Count wake, he has no weapon at hand. Wound yourself, as you say, in some place not dangerous to life, and to-morrow, or within an hour after my escape, tell what tale you will. I will go, meanwhile, at once to Oswald; I will either bribe his silence—ay, and his immediate absence from England—or he shall die. A death that secures our own self-preservation is excusable in the reading of all law, divine or human!'

"I heard, but they deemed me insensible: they had already begun to grow unheeding of my presence. Montreuil saw me, and his countenance grew soft. 'I know all,' I said, as I caught his eye which looked on me in pity, 'I know all—they are married. Enough! with my hope ceases my love: care not for me.'

"Montreuil embraced and spoke to me in kindness and in praise. He assured me that you had kept your wedding so close a secret that he knew it not, nor did even Desmarais, till the evening before—till after he had proposed that I should visit Isora that very day. I know not, I care not, whether he was sincere in this. In whatever way one line in the dread scroll of his conduct be read, the scroll was written in guile, and in blood was it sealed. I appeared not to notice Montreuil or his accomplice any more. The latter left the house first. Montreuil stole forth, as he thought, unobserved; he was masked, and in complete disguise. I, too, went forth. I hastened to a shop where such things were procured; I purchased a mask and cloak similar to the priest's. I had heard Montreuil agree with Desmarais that the door of the house should be left ajar, in order to give greater facility to the escape of the former; I repaired to the house in time to see Montreuil enter it. A strange, sharp sort of cunning, which I had never known before, ran through the dark confusion of my mind. I waited for a minute, till it was likely that Montreuil had gained your chamber; I then pushed open the door, and ascended the stairs. I met no one—the moonlight fell around me, and its rays seemed to

me like ghosts, pale and shrouded, and gazing upon me with wan and lustreless eyes. I know not how I found your chamber, but it was the only one I entered. I stood in the same room with Isora and yourself—ye lay in sleep—Isora's face——. O, God! I know no more—no more of that night of horror—save that I fled from the house reeking with blood—a murderer—and the murderer of Isora!

"Then came a long, long dream. I was in a sea of blood—blood-red was the sky, and one still, solitary star that gleamed far away, with a sickly and wan light, was the only spot, above and around, which was not of the same intolerable dye. And I thought my eyelids were cut off, as those of the Roman consul are said to have been, and I had nothing to shield my eyes from that crimson light, and the rolling waters of that unnatural sea. And the red air burnt through my eyes into my brain, and then that also, methought, became blood; and all memory—all images of memory—all idea—wore a material shape, and a material color, and were blood, too. Everything was unutterably silent, except when my own shrieks rang over the shoreless ocean, as I drifted on. At last I fixed my eyes—the eyes which I might never close—upon that pale and single star; and after I had gazed a little while, the star seemed to change slowly—slowly—until it grew like the pale face of that murdered girl, and then it vanished utterly, and *all* was blood!

"This vision was sometimes broken—sometimes varied by others—but it always returned; and when at last I completely woke from it, I was in Italy, in a convent. Montreuil had lost no time in removing me from England. But once, shortly after my recovery, for I was mad for many months, he visited me, and he saw what a wreck I had become. He pitied me; and when I told him I longed above all things for liberty—for the green earth and the fresh air, and a removal from that gloomy abode, he opened the convent gates, and blessed me, and bade me go forth. 'All I require of you,' said he, 'is a promise. If it be understood that you live, you will be persecuted by inquiries and questions, which will terminate in a conviction of your crime: let it therefore be reported in England that you are dead. Consent to the report, and promise never to quit Italy, nor to see Morton Devereux.'

"I promised—and that promise I have kept; but I promised not that I would never reveal to you, in writing, the black tale which I have now recorded. May it reach you. There is one in this vicinity who has undertaken to bear it to you; he says he has known misery—and when he said so, his voice sounded in my ear like yours; and I looked upon him, and thought his features were cast somewhat in the same mould as your own—so I have trusted him. I have now told all. I have wrenched the secret from my heart in agony and with fear. I have told all—though things which I believe are fiends, have started forth from the grim walls around to forbid it—though dark wings have swept by me, and talons, as of a bird, have attempted to tear away the paper on which I write—though eyes, whose light was never drunk from earth, have glared on me—and mocking voices and horrible laughter have made my flesh creep, and thrilled through the marrow of my bones—I have told all—I have finished my last labor in this world, and I will now lie down and die.

"AUBREY DEVEREUX."

The paper dropped from my hands. Whatever I had felt in reading it, I had not flinched once from the task. From the first word even to the last, I had gone through the dreadful tale, nor uttered a syllable, nor moved a limb. And now as I rose, though I had found the being who to me had withered this world into one impassable desert—though I had found the unrelenting foe and the escaped murderer of Isora—the object of the execration and vindictiveness of years—not one single throb of wrath—not one single sentiment of vengeance, was in my breast. I passed at once to the bedside of my brother; he was awake, but still and calm—the calm and stillness of exhausted nature. I knelt down quietly beside him. I took his hand, and I shrank not from the touch, though by that hand the only woman I ever loved had perished.

"Look up, Aubrey!" said I, struggling with tears which, despite of my most earnest effort, came over me; "look up, all is forgiven. Who on earth shall withhold pardon from a crime which on earth has been so awfully punished? Look up, Aubrey; I am your brother, and I forgive you. You are right—my childhood *was* harsh and fierce; and had you feared me less you might have confided in me, and

you would not have sinned and suffered as you have done now. Fear me no longer. Look up, Aubrey, it is Morton who calls you. Why do you not speak? My brother, my brother—a word, a single word, I implore you."

For one moment did Aubrey raise his eyes—one moment did he meet mine. His lips quivered wildly—I heard the death-rattle—he sunk back, and his hand dropped from my clasp. My words had snapped asunder the last chord of life. Merciful Heaven! I thank thee that those words were the words of pardon!

CHAPTER V.

In which the History makes a great Stride towards the final Catastrophe—The Return to England, and the Visit to a Devotee.

At night, and in the thrilling forms of the Catholic ritual, was Aubrey Devereux consigned to earth. After that ceremony I could linger no longer in the vicinity of the hermitage. I took leave of the abbot and richly endowed his convent in return for the protection it had afforded to the anchorite and the masses which had been said for his soul. Before I left Anselmo, I questioned him if any friend to the hermit had ever, during his seclusion, held any communication with the abbot respecting him. Anselmo, after a little hesitation, confessed that a man, a Frenchman, seemingly of no high rank, had several times visited the convent, as if to scrutinize the habits and life of the anchorite, he had declared himself commissioned by the hermit's relations to make inquiry of him from time to time; but he had given the abbot no clue to discover himself, though Anselmo had especially hinted at the expediency of being acquainted with some quarter to which he could direct any information of change in the hermit's habits or health. This man had been last at the convent about two months before the present date; but one of the brothers declared that he had seen him in the vicinity of the well on the very day on which the hermit died. The description of this stranger was essentially different from that which would have been given of Montreuil, but I imagined that if not the Abbe himself, the stranger was one in his confidence or his employ.

I now repaired to Rome, where I made the most extensive, though guarded, inquiries after Montreuil, and at length I learned that he was lying concealed, or rather unnoticed, in England, under a disguised name; having, by friends or by money, obtained therein a tacit connivance, though not an open pardon. No sooner did I learn this intelligence, than I resolved forthwith to depart to that country. I crossed the Alps—traversed France—and took ship at Calais for Dover.

Behold me then upon the swift seas bent upon a double purpose—reconciliation with a brother whom I had wronged, and vengeance—no, not vengeance, but *justice* against the criminal I had discovered! No! it was not revenge—it was no infuriate, no unholy desire of inflicting punishment upon a personal foe, which possessed me—it was a steady, calm, unwavering resolution, to obtain justice against the profound and systematized guilt of a villain who had been the bane of all who had come within his contact, that nerved my arm and engrossed my heart. Bear witness, Heaven, I am not a vindictive man! I have, it is true, been extreme in hatred as in love; but I have ever had the power to control myself from yielding to its impulse. When the full persuasion of Gerald's crime reigned within me, I had thralled my emotion, I had curbed it within the circle of my own heart, though there, thus pent and self-consuming, it was an agony and a torture; I had resisted the voice of that blood which cried from the earth against a murderer, and which had consigned the solemn charge of justice to my hands. Year after year I had nursed an unappeased desire; nor ever when it stung the most, suffered it to become an actual revenge. I had knelt in tears and in softness by Aubrey's bed—I had poured forth my pardon over him—I had felt, while I did so,—no, not so much sternness as would have slain a worm. By his hand had the murtherous stroke been dealt—on his soul was the crimson stain of that blood which had flowed through the veins of the gentlest and the most innocent of God's creatures—and yet the blow was unavenged and the crime forgiven. For him there was a palliative, or even a gloomy but an unanswerable excuse. In the confession which had so terribly solved the mystery of my life, the seeds of that curse, which had grown at last into MADNESS, might be discovered even in the first dawn of Aubrey's

existence. The latent poison might be detected in the morbid fever of his young devotion—in his jealous cravings of affection—in the first flush of his ill-omened love, even before rivalship and wrath began. Then, too, his guilt had not been regularly organized into one cold and deliberate system—it broke forth in impetuous starts, in frantic paroxysms—it was often wrestled with, though by a feeble mind—it was often conquered by a tender, though a fitful temper—it might not have rushed into the last and most awful crime, but for the damning instigation and the atrocious craft of one, who (Aubrey rightly said) could wield and mould the unhappy victim at his will. Might not, did I say? Nay, but for Montreuil's accursed influence, had I not Aubrey's own word that that crime never *would have* been committed? He had resolved to stifle his love—his heart had already melted to Isora and to me—he had already tasted the sweets of a virtuous resolution, and conquered the first bitterness of opposition to his passion. Why should not the resolution thus auspiciously begun have been mellowed into effect? Why should not the grateful and awful remembrance of the crime he had escaped continue to preserve him from meditating crime anew? And (O, thought, which, while I now write, steals over me and brings with it an unutterable horde of emotions!) but for that all-tainting, all-withering, influence, Aubrey's soul might at this moment have been pure from murder, and Isora,—the living Isora,—by my side!

What wonder, as these thoughts came over me, that sense, feeling, reason, gradually shrunk and hardened into one stern resolve? I looked as from a height over the whole conduct of Montreuil: I saw him in our early infancy with no definite motive (beyond the general policy of intrigue), no fixed design, which might somewhat have lessened the callousness of the crime, not only fomenting dissensions in the hearts of brothers—not only turning the season of warm affections and yet of unopened passion, into strife and rancor—but seizing upon the inherent and reigning vice of our bosoms, which he should have seized to crush—in order only by that master-vice to weave our characters and sway our conduct to his will, whenever a cool-blooded and merciless policy required us to be of that will the minions and the tools. Thus had he taken hold of the diseased jealousy of Aubrey, and by that handle, joined to the latent spring of superstition, guided him on his wretched course of misery and guilt. Thus, by a moral irresolution in Gerald had he bowed him also to his purposes, and by an infantine animosity between that brother and myself, held us both in a state of mutual hatred which I shuddered to recall. Readily could I now perceive that my charges or my suspicions against Gerald, which, in ordinary circumstances, he might have dispassionately come forward to disprove, had been represented to him by Montreuil in the light of groundless and wilful insults; and thus he had been led to scorn that full and cool explanation which, if it had not elucidated the mystery of my afflictions, would have removed the false suspicion of guilt from himself, and the real guilt of wrath and animosity from me.

The crime of the forged will, and the outrage to the dead and to myself, was a link in his woven guilt which I regarded the least. I looked rather to the black and the consummate craft by which Aubrey had been implicated in that sin; and my indignation became mixed with horror when I saw Montreuil working to that end of fraud by the instigation not only of a guilty and unlawful passion, but of the yet more unnatural and terrific engine of *frenzy;*—of a maniac's despair. Over the peace—the happiness—the honor—the virtue of a whole family, through fraud and through blood, this priest had marched onward to the goal of his icy and heartless ambition, unrelenting and unrepenting; "but not," I said, as I clenched my hand till the nails met in the flesh, "not for ever unchecked and unrequited!"

But in what manner was justice to be obtained? A public court of law? What! drag forward the deep dishonor of my house—the gloomy and convulsive history of my departed brother—his crime and his insanity? What! bring that history, connected as it was with the fate of Isora, before the curious and the insolent gaze of the babbling world? Bear that awful record to the jests, to the scrutiny, the marvel and the pity, of that most coarse of all tribunals—an English court of law? and that most torturing of all exposures—the vulgar comments of an English public? Could I do this? Yea, in the sternness of my soul,

I felt that I could submit even to that humiliation, if no other way presented itself by which I could arrive at justice. *Was* there no other way?—at that question conjecture paused—I formed no scheme, or rather, I formed a hundred and rejected them all; my mind settled, at last, into an indistinct, unquestioned, but prophetic, resolution, that, whenever my path crossed Montreuil's it should be to his destruction. I asked not how, nor when, the blow was to be dealt; I felt only a solemn and exultant certainty that, whether it borrowed the sword of the law, or the weapon of private justice, *mine* should be the hand which brought retribution to the ashes of the dead and the agony of the survivor.

So soon as my mind had subsided into this determination, I suffered my thoughts to dwell upon subjects less sternly agitating. Fondly did I look forward to a meeting with Gerald, and a reconciliation of all our early and most frivolous disputes. As an atonement for the injustice my suspicions had done him I resolved not to reclaim my inheritance. My fortune was already ample, and all that I cared to possess of the hereditary estates were the ruins of the old house and the copses of the surrounding park; these Gerald would in all likelihood easily yield to me: and with the natural sanguineness of my temperament, I already planned the reconstruction of the ancient building, and the method of that solitary life in which I resolved that the remainder of my years should be spent.

Turning from this train of thought, I recurred to the mysterious and sudden disappearance of Oswald: *that* I was now easily able to account for. There could be no doubt but that Montreuil had (immediately after the murder), as he declared he would, induced Oswald to quit England, and preserve silence, either by bribery or by threats. And when I recalled the impression which the man had made upon me—an impression certainly not favorable to the elevation or the rigid honesty of his mind—I could not but imagine that one or the other of these means Montreuil found far from difficult of success. The delirious fever into which the wounds and the scene of that night had thrown me, and the long interval that consequently elapsed before inquiry was directed to Oswald, gave him every opportunity and indulgence in absenting himself from the country, and it was not improbable that he had accompanied Aubrey to Italy.

Here I paused, in deep acknowledgment of the truth of Aubrey's assertion, that "under similar circumstances, I might perhaps have been equally guilty." My passions had indeed been "intense and fierce as his own;" and there was a dread coincidence in the state of mind into which each of us had been thrown by the event of that night, which made the epoch of a desolated existence to both of us; if mine had been but a passing delirium, and his a confirmed and lasting disease of the intellect, the causes of our malady had been widely different. He had been the criminal—*I* only the sufferer.

Thus as I leant over the deck, and the waves bore me homeward, after so many years and vicissitudes, did the shadows of thought and memory flit across me. How seemingly apart, yet how closely linked, had been the great events in my wandering and wild life. My early acquaintance with Bolingbroke, whom for more than nine years I had not seen, and who, at a superficial glance would seem to have exercised influence over my public, rather than my private, life—how secretly, yet how powerfully, had that circumstance led even to the very thoughts which now possessed me, and to the very object on which I was now bound. But for that circumstance, I might not have learnt of the retreat of Don Diego D'Alvarex in his last illness; I might never have renewed my love to Isora; and whatever had been her fate, destitution and poverty would have been a less misfortune than her union with me. But for my friendship for Bolingbroke, I might not have visited France, nor gained the favor of the Regent, nor the ill offices of Dubois, nor the protection and kindness of the Czar. I might never have been ambassador at the Court of ——, nor met with Bezoni, nor sought an asylum for a spirit sated with pomp and thirsting for truth, at the foot of the Apennines, nor read that history (which, indeed, might then never have occurred,) that now rankled at my heart, urging my movements and coloring my desires. Thus, by the finest, but the strongest, meshes, had the thread of my political honors been woven with that of my private afflictions. And thus, even at the licentious festivals of the Regent of France, or the lifeless parade of the Court

of ——, the dark stream of events had flowed onward beneath my feet, bearing me insensibly to that very spot of time, from which I now surveyed the past and looked upon the mist and shadows of the future.

Adverse winds made the little voyage across the Channel a business of four days. On the evening of the last we landed at Dover. Within thirty miles of that town was my mother's retreat; and I resolved, before I sought a reconciliation with Gerald, or justice against Montreuil, to visit her seclusion. Accordingly, the next day, I repaired to her abode.

What a contrast is there between the lives of human beings! Considering the beginning and the end of all mortal careers are the same, how wonderfully is the interval varied! Some, the weeds of the world, dashed from shore to shore—all vicissitude—enterprise—strife—disquiet; others, the world's lichen—rooted to some peaceful rock—growing—flourishing—withering on the same spot,—scarce a feeling expressed—scarce a sentiment called forth—scarce a tithe of the properties of their very nature expanded into action.

There was an air of quiet and stillness in the red quadrangular building, as my carriage stopped at its porch, which struck upon me, like a breathing reproach to those who sought the abode of peace with feelings opposed to the spirit of the place. A small projecting porch was covered with ivy, and thence issued an aged portress in answer to my summons.

"The Countess Devereux," said she, "is now the superior of this society," (convent they called it not,) "and rarely admits any stranger."

I gave in my claim to admission, and was ushered into a small parlor: all there, too, was still—the brown oak wainscoting—the huge chairs—the few antique portraits—the *uninhabited* aspect of the chamber—all were silently eloquent of quietude—but a quietude comfortless and sombre. At length, my mother appeared, I sprung forward—my childhood was before me—years—care—change were forgotten—I was a boy again—I sprung forward, and was in my mother's embrace! It was long before, recovering myself, I noted how lifeless and chill was that embrace, but I did so at last, and my enthusiasm withered at once.

We sate down together, and conversed long and uninterruptedly, but our conversation was like that of acquaintances, not the fondest and closest of all relations—(for I need scarcely add that I told her not of my meeting with Aubrey, nor undeceived her with respect to the date of his death). Every monastic recluse that I had hitherto seen, even in the most seeming content with retirement, had loved to converse of the exterior world, and had betrayed an interest in its events—for my mother only, worldly objects and interests seemed utterly dead. She expressed little surprise to see me—little surprise at my alteration; she only said that my mien was improved, and that I reminded her of my father; she testified no anxiety to hear of my travels or my adventures—she testified even no willingness to speak of herself—she described to me the life of one day, and then said that the history of ten years was told. A close cap confined all the locks for whose rich luxuriance and golden hue she had once been noted—for here they were not the victim of a vow, as in a nunnery they would have been—and her dress was plain, simple and unadorned: save these alterations of attire, none were visible in her exterior—the torpor of her life seemed to have paralyzed even time—the bloom yet dwelt in her unwrinkled cheek—the mouth had not fallen—the faultless features were faultless still. But there was a deeper stillness than ever breathing through this frame: it was as if the soul had been lulled to sleep—her mien was lifeless—her voice was lifeless—her gesture was lifeless—the impression she produced was like that of entering some chamber which has not been entered before for a century. She consented to my request to stay with her all the day—a bed was prepared for me, and at sunrise the next morning, I was folded once more in the chilling mechanism of her embrace, and dismissed on my journey to the metropolis.

CHAPTER VI.

The Retreat of a celebrated Man, and a Visit to a great Poet.

I ARRIVED in town, and drove at once to Gerald's house: it was not difficult to find it, for in my young day it had been the residence of the duke of ———; and wealthy as I knew

was the owner of the Devereux lands, I was somewhat startled at the extent and the magnificence of his palace. To my inexpressible disappointment, I found that Gerald had left London a day or two before my arrival on a visit to a nobleman nearly connected with our family, and residing in the same county as that in which Devereux Court was situated. Since the fire, which had destroyed all of the old house but the one tower, which I had considered as peculiarly my own, Gerald, I heard, had always, in visiting his estates, taken up his abode at the mansion of one or other of his neighbors; and to Lord ———'s house, I now resolved to repair.

My journey was delayed for a day or two, by accidentally seeing at the door of the hotel, to which I drove from Gerald's house, the favorite servant of Lord Bolingbroke. This circumstance revived in me, at once, all my attachment to that personage, and hearing he was at his country house, within a few miles from town, I resolved the next morning to visit him. It was not only that I contemplated with an eager, yet a melancholy interest, an interview with one whose blazing career I had long watched, and whose letters (for during the years we had been parted, he wrote to me often) seemed to testify the same satiety of the triumphs and gauds of ambition which had brought something of wisdom to myself; it was not only that I wished to commune with that Bolingbroke in retirement whom I had known the oracle of statesmen, and the pride of courts; nor even that I loved the man, and was eager once more to embrace him; a fiercer and more active motive urged me to visit one whose knowledge of all men, and application of their various utilities, were so remarkable, and who, even in his present peace and retirement, would, not improbably, be acquainted with the abode of that unquiet and plotting ecclesiastic whom I now panted to discover, and whom Bolingbroke had of old often guided or employed.

When my carriage stopped at the statesman's door, I was informed that Lord Bolingbroke was at his farm. Farm! how oddly did that word sound in my ear, coupled as it was with the name of one so brilliant and so restless. I asked the servant to direct me where I should find him, and, following the directions, I proceeded to the search alone. It was a day towards the close of autumn, bright, soft, clear, and calm as the decline of a vigorous and genial age. I walked slowly through a field robbed of its golden grain, and as I entered another, I saw the object of my search. He had seemingly just given orders to a person in a laborer's dress, who was quitting him, and with downcast eyes he was approaching towards me. I noted how slow and even was the pace which, once stately, yet rapid and irregular, had betrayed the haughty, but wild, character of his mind. He paused often, as if in thought, and I observed that once he stopped longer than usual, and seemed to gaze wistfully on the ground. Afterwards (when I had joined him) we passed that spot, and I remarked with a secret smile, that it contained one of those little mounds in which that busy and herded tribe of the insect race, which have been held out to man's social state at once as a mockery and a model, held their populous home. There seemed a latent moral in the pause and watch of the disappointed statesman by that mound, which afforded a clue to the nature of his reflections.

He did not see me till I was close before him, and had called him by his name, nor did he at first recognize me, for my garb was foreign, and my upper lip unshaven; and, as I said before, years had strangely altered me: but when he did, he testified all the cordiality I had anticipated. I linked my arm in his, and we walked to and fro for hours, talking of all that had passed since and before our parting, and feeling our hearts warm to each other as we talked.

"The last time I saw you," said he, "how widely did our hopes and objects differ; yours from my own—you seemingly had the vantage-ground, but it was an artificial eminence, and my level state, though it appeared less tempting, was more secure. I had just been disgraced by a misguided and ungrateful prince. I had already gone into a retirement, where my only honors were proportioned to my fortitude in bearing condemnation—and my only flatterer was the hope of finding a companion and a Mentor in myself. You, my friend, parted with life before you; and you only relinquished the pursuit of Fortune at one Court, to meet her advances at another. Nearly ten years have flown since that time—my situation is but little changed—I am returned, it is true, to my native soil, but not to a soil more in-

dulgent to ambition and exertion than the scene of my exile. My sphere of action is still shut from me—*my mind is still banished.** You return young in years, but full of successes. Have they brought you happiness, Devereux? or have you yet a temper to envy my content?"

"Alas!" said I, "who can bear too close a search beneath the mask and robe? Talk not of me now. It is ungracious for the fortunate to repine—and I reserve whatever may disquiet me within, for your future consolation and advice. At present speak to me of yourself—you are happy, then?"

"I am!" said Bolingbroke, emphatically. —"Life seems to me to possess two treasures —one glittering and precarious, the other of less rich a show, but of a more solid value. The one is Power, the other Virtue; and there is this main difference between the two—Power is entrusted to us as a loan ever required again, and with a terrible arrear of interest —Virtue obtained by us as a *boon* which we can only lose through our own folly, when once it is acquired. In my youth I was caught by the former—hence my errors and my misfortunes! In my declining years I have sought the latter; hence my palliatives and my consolation. But you have not seen my home, and *all* its attractions," added Bolingbroke, with a smile, which reminded me of his former self. "I will show them to you." And we turned our steps to the house.

As he walked thither, I wondered to find how little melancholy was the change Bolingbroke had undergone. Ten years, which bring man from his prime to his decay, had indeed left their trace upon his stately form, and the still unrivalled beauty of his noble features; but the manner gained all that the form had lost. In his days of more noisy greatness, there had been something artificial and unquiet in the sparkling alternations he had loved to adopt. He had been too fond of changing wisdom by a quick turn into wit—too fond of the affectation of bordering the serious with the gay—business with pleasure. If this had not taken from the polish of his manner, it had diminished its dignity and given it the air of being assumed and insincere. Now all was quiet, earnest, and impressive; there was tenderness even in what was melancholy: and if there yet lingered the affectation of blending the classic character with his own, the character was more noble, and the affectation more unseen. But this manner was only the faint mirror of a mind which, retaining much of its former mould, had been embellished and exalted by adversity, and which, if it banished not its former frailties, had acquired a thousand new virtues to redeem them.

"You see," said my companion, pointing to the walls of the hall, which we had now entered, "the subject which at present occupies the greater part of my attention. I am meditating how to make the hall most illustrative of its owner's pursuits. You see the desire of improving, of creating, and of associating the improvement and the creation with ourselves, follows us banished men even to our seclusion. I think of having those walls painted with the implements of husbandry, and through pictures of spades and ploughshares, to express my employments, and testify my content in them."

"Cincinnatus is a better model than Aristippus, confess it," said I, smiling. "But if the senators come hither to summon you to power, will you resemble the Roman, not only in being found at your plough, but in your reluctance to leave it, and your eagerness to return?"

"What shall I say to you?" replied Bolingbroke. "Will you play the cynic if I answer *no?* We *should not* boast of despising power, when of use to others, but of being contented to live without it. This is the end of my philosophy! But let me present you to one whom I value more now than I valued power at any time."

As he said this, Bolingbroke threw open the door of an apartment, and introduced me to a lady with whom he had found that domestic happiness denied him in his first marriage.—The niece of Madame de Maintenon, this most charming woman, possessed all her aunt's wit, and far more than all her aunt's beauty.* She

* I need scarcely remind the reader that Lord Bolingbroke, though he had received a full pardon, was forbidden to resume his seat in the House of Lords. —Ed.

* "I am not ashamed to say to you that I admire her more every hour of my life."—*Letter from Lord Bolingbroke to Swift.*

Bolingbroke loved her to the last; and perhaps it is just to a man so celebrated for his gallantries, to add that this beautiful and accomplished woman seems to have admired and *esteemed* as much as she loved him. —Ed.

was in weak health; but her vivacity was extreme, and her conversation just what should be the conversation of a woman who shines without striving for it.

The business on which I was bound only allowed me to stay two days with Bolingbroke, and this I stated at first, lest he should have dragged me over his farm.

"Well," said my host, after vainly endeavoring to induce me to promise a longer stay, "if you *can* only give us two days, I must write and excuse myself to a great man with whom I was to dine to-day: yet, if it were not so inhospitable, I should, like much, to carry you with me to his house, for I own that I wish you to see my companions, and to learn that if I still consult the oracles, thay are less for the predictions of fortune than as the inspirations of the god."

"Ah!" said Lady Bolingbroke, who spoke in French, "I know whom you allude to. Give him my homage, and assure him, when he next visits us, we will appoint six *dames du palais* to receive and pet him."

Upon this I insisted upon accompanying Bolingbroke to the house of so fortunate a being, and he consented to my wish with feigned reluctance, but evident pleasure.

"And who," said I to Lady Bolingbroke, "is the happy object of so much respect?"

Lady Bolingbroke answered laughing, that nothing was so pleasant as suspense, and that it would be cruel in her to deprive me of it; and we conversed with so much zest, that it was not till Bolingbroke had left the room for some moments, that I observed he was not present. I took the opportunity to remark that I was rejoiced to find him so happy, and with such just cause for happiness.

"He *is* happy, though, at times, he is restless. How, chained to this oar, can he be otherwise?" answered Lady Bolingbroke, with a sigh: "but his friends," she added, "who most enjoy his retirement, must yet lament it. His genius is not wasted here, it is true: where *could* it be wasted? But who does not feel that it is employed in too confined a sphere? And yet—" and I saw a tear start to her eye —"I, at least, ought not to repine. I should lose the best part of my happiness if there was nothing I could console him for."

"Believe me," said I, "I have known Bolingbroke in the zenith of his success; but never knew him so worthy of congratulation as *now!*"

"Is that flattery to him or to me?" said Lady Bolingbroke, smiling archly, for her smiles were quick successors to her tears.

"*Detur digniori!*" answered I; "but you must allow that, though it is a fine thing to have all that the world can give, it is still better to gain something that the world cannot take away?"

"See you also a Philosopher?" cried Lady Bolingbroke, gaily. "Ah, poor me! In my youth, my portion was the cloister;* in my later years I am banished to *the porch!* You have no conception, Monsieur Devereux, what wise faces and profound maxims we have here; especially as all who come to visit my lord think it necessary to quote Tully, and talk of solitude as if it were a heaven! *Les pauvres bons gens!* they seem a little surprised when Henry receives them smilingly—begs them to construe the Latin—gives them good wine, and sends them back to London with faces half the length they were on their arrival. *Mais voici Monsieur le fermier philosophe!*"

And Bolingbroke entering, I took my leave of this lively and interesting lady, and entered his carriage.

As soon as we were seated, he pressed me for my reasons for refusing to prolong my visit. As I thought they would be more opportune after the excursion of the day was over, and as, in truth, I was not eager to relate them, I begged to defer the narration till our return to his house at night, and then I directed the conversation into a new channel.

"My chief companion," said Bolingbroke, after describing to me his course of life, "is the man you are about to visit: he has his frailties and infirmities—and in saying that, I only imply that he is human—but he is wise, reflective, generous, and affectionate; add these qualities to a dazzling wit, and a genius deep, if not sublime, and what wonder that we forget something of vanity and something of fretfulness—effects rather of the frame than of the mind; the wonder only is that, with a body the victim to every disease, crippled and imbecile from the cradle, his frailties should not be more numerous, and his care, his thoughts, and attentions not wholly limited to his own com-

* She was brought up at St. Cyr.—Ed.

plaints—for the sickly are almost of necessity selfish—and that mind must have a vast share of benevolence which can always retain the softness of charity and love for others, when pain and disease constitute the morbid links that perpetually bind it to self. If this great character is my chief companion, my chief correspondent is not less distinguished; in a word, no longer to keep you in suspense, Pope is my companion, and Swift my correspondent."

"You are fortunate—but so also are they. Your letter informed me of Swift's honorable exile in Ireland—how does he bear it?"

"Too feelingly—his disappointments turn his blood to acid. He said, characteristically enough, in one of his letters, that in fishing once when he was a little boy, he felt a great fish at the end of his line, which he drew up almost to the ground, but it dropt in, and the disappointment, he adds, vexes him to this day, and he believes it to be the type of all his future disappointments:* it is wonderful how reluctantly a very active mind sinks into rest."

"Yet why should retirement be rest? Do you recollect in the first conversation we ever had together, we talked of Cowley? Do you recollect how justly, and even sublimely, he has said 'Cogitation is that which distinguishes the solitude of a God from that of a wild beast?'"

"It is finely said," answered Bollingbroke, "but Swift was born not for cogitation, but action—for turbulent times, not for calm. He ceases to be great directly he is still; and his bitterness at every vexation is so great that I have often thought, in listening to him, of the Abbé de Cyran, who, attempting to throw nutshells out of the bars of his window, and constantly failing in the attempt, exclaimed in a paroxysm of rage, 'Thus does Providence delight in frustrating my designs!'"

"But you are fallen from a far greater height of hope than Swift could ever have attained—you bear this change well, but not, *I hope*, without a struggle."

"You are right—*not* without a struggle; while corruption thrives I will not be silent; while bad men govern, I will not be still."

In conversation of this sort passed the time, till we arrived at Pope's villa.

We found the poet in his study—indued as some of his pictures represent him, in a long gown and a velvet cap. He received Bolingbroke with great tenderness, and being, as he said, in robuster health than he had enjoyed for months, he insisted on carrying us to his grotto. I know nothing more common to poets than a pride in what belongs to their houses, and perhaps to a man not ill-natured, there are few things more pleasant than indulging the little weaknesses of those we admire. We sat down in a small temple made entirely of shells; and whether it was that the Creative Genius gave an undue charm to the place, I

* In this letter Swift adds, "I should be ashamed to say this if you (Lord Bolingbroke) had not a spirit fitter to bear your own misfortunes than I have to think of them;" and this is true. Nothing can be more striking, or more honorable to Lord Bolingbroke, than the contrast between Swift's letters and that nobleman's upon the subject of their mutual disappointments. I especially note the contrast, because it has been so grievously the cant of Lord Bolingbroke's decriers to represent his affection for retirement as hollow, and his resignation in adversity as a boast rather than a fact. Now I will challenge any one *thoroughly* and dispassionately to examine what is left to us of the life of this great man, and after having done so, to select from all modern history an example of one who, in the prime of life and height of ambition, ever passed from a very active and exciting career into retirement and disgrace, and bore the change—long, bitter, and permanent as it was—with a greater and more thoroughly sustained magnanimity than did Lord Bolingbroke. He has been reproached for taking part in political contests in the midst of his praises and "affected enjoyment" of retirement; and this, made matter of reproach, is exactly the subject on which he seems to me the *most* worthy of praise. For, putting aside all motives for action, on the purity of which men are generally incredulous, as a hatred to ill government (an antipathy wonderfully strong in wise men, and wonderfully weak in fools), the honest impulse of the citizen, and the better and higher sentiment, to which Bolingbroke appeared peculiarly alive, of affection to mankind—putting these utterly aside—it must be owned that resignation is the more noble in proportion as it is the less passive—that retirement is only a morbid selfishness if it prohibit exertions for others; that it is only really dignified and noble when it is the shade whence issue the oracles that are to instruct mankind; and that retirement of this nature is the sole seclusion which a good and wise man will covet or commend. The very philosophy which makes such a man seek the *quiet*, makes him eschew the *inutility* of the hermitage. Very little praiseworthy to me would have seemed Lord Bolingbroke among his haymakers and ploughmen, if among haymakers and ploughmen he had looked with an indifferent eye upon a profligate minister and a venal parliament; very little interest in my eyes would have attached itself to his beans and vetches, had beans and vetches caused him to forget that if he was happier in a farm, he could be more useful in a senate, and made him forego, in the sphere of a bailiff, all care for re-entering that of a legislator.—Ed.

know not: but as the murmur of a rill, glassy as the Blandusian fountain, was caught, and re-given from side to side by a perpetual echo, and through an arcade of trees, whose leaves, ever and anon, fell startingly to the ground beneath the light touch of the autumn air, you saw the sails on the river pass and vanish, like the cares which breathe over the smooth glass of wisdom, but may not linger to dim it, it was not difficult to invest the place, humble as it was, with a classic interest, or to recall the loved retreats of the Roman bards, without smiling too fastidiously at the contrast.

"Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen,
Within thy airy shell,
By slow Meander's margin green,
Or by the violet embroidered vale,
Where the lovelorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well;
Sweet Echo, dost thou shun those haunts of yore,
And in the dim caves of a northern shore
Delight to dwell!"

"Let the compliment to you, Pope," said Bolingbroke, "atone for the profanation of weaving three wretched lines of mine with those most musical notes of Milton."

"Ah!" said Pope, "would that you could give me a fitting inscription for my fount and grotto? The only one I can remember is hacknied, and yet it has spoilt me, I fear, for all others.

"Hujus Nympha loci, sacri custodia fontis
Dormio dum blandæ sentio murmur aquæ;
Parce meum, quisquis tanges cava marmora, somnum
Rumpere; sive bibas, sive lavére, tace." *

"We cannot hope to match it," said Bolingbroke, "though you know I value myself on these things. But tell me your news of Gay—is he growing wiser?"

"Not a whit; he is for ever a dupe to the *spes credula;* always talking of buying an annuity, that he may be independent, and always spending as fast as he earns, that he may appear munificent."

"Poor Gay! but he is a common example of the improvidence of his tribe, while you are an exception. Yet mark, Devereux, the inconsistency of Pope's thrift and carefulness: he sends a parcel of fruit to some ladies with this note, 'Take care of the papers that wrap the apples, and return them safely; they are the only copies I have of one part of the Iliad.' Thus, you see, our economist saves his paper, and hazards his epic!"

Pope, who is always flattered by an allusion to his negligence of fame, smiled slightly and answered, "What man, alas, ever profits by the lessons of his friends? How many exact rules has our good Dean of St. Patrick laid down for both of us—how angrily still does he chide us for our want of prudence and our love of good living. I intend, in answer to his charges on the latter score, though I vouch, as I well may, for our temperance, to give him the reply of the sage to the foolish courtier ——."

"What was that?" asked Bolingbroke.

"Why the courtier saw the sage picking out the best dishes at table. 'How,' said he, with a sneer, 'are sages such epicures?'—'Do you think, sir,' replied the wise man, reaching over the table to help himself, 'do you think, sir, that the Creator made the good things of this world only for fools?'"

"How the Dean will pish and pull his wig, when he reads your illustration," said Bolingbroke, laughing. "We shall never agree in our reasonings on that part of philosophy. Swift loves to go out of his way to find privation or distress, and has no notion of Epicurean wisdom; for my part, I think the use of knowledge is to make us happier. I would compare the mind to the beautiful statue of Love by Praxiteles—when its eyes were bandaged, the countenance seemed grave and sad, but the moment you removed the bandage, the most serene and enchanting smile diffused itself over the whole face."

So passed the morning, till the hour of dinner, and this repast was served with an elegance and luxury which the sons of Apollo seldom command.* As the evening closed, our conversation fell upon friendship, and the increasing disposition towards it, which comes with

* Thus very inadequately translated by Pope, (See his Letter to Edward Blount, Esq., descriptive of his grotto).

"Nymph of the grot, these sacred springs I keep,
And to the murmur of these waters sleep:
Ah, spare my slumbers; gently tread the cave,
And drink in silence, or in silence lave."

It is, however, quite impossible to convey to an unlearned reader the exquisite and spirit-like beauty of the Latin verses.—Ed.

* Pope seems to have been rather capricious in this respect; but in general he must be considered open to the sarcasm of displaying the bounteous host to those who did not want a dinner, and the niggard to those who did.—Ed.

increasing years. "Whilst my mind," said Bolingbroke, "shrinks more and more from the world, and feels in its independence less yearning to external objects, the ideas of friendship return oftener, they busy me, they warm me more. Is it that we grow more tender as the moment of our great separation approaches? or is it that they who are to live together in another state (for friendship exists not but for the good) begin to feel more strongly that divine sympathy which is to be the great bond of their future society?" *

While Bolingbroke was thus speaking, and Pope listened with all the love and reverence which he evidently bore to his friend stamped upon his worn but expressive countenance, I inly said, "Surely, the love between minds like these should live and last without the changes that ordinary affections feel! Who would not mourn for the strength of all human ties, if hereafter these are broken, and asperity succeed to friendship, or aversion to esteem? *I*, a wanderer, without heir to my memory and wealth, shall pass away, and my hasty and unmellowed fame will moulder with my clay; but will the names of those whom I now behold ever fall languidly on the ears of a future race, and will there not for ever be some sympathy with their friendship, softer and warmer than admiration for their fame?"

We left our celebrated host about two hours before midnight, and returned to Dawley.

On our road thither I questioned Bolingbroke respecting Montreuil, and I found that, as I had surmised, he was able to give me some information of that arch-schemer. Gerald's money and hereditary influence had procured tacit connivance at the Jesuit's residence in England, and Montreuil had for some years led a quiet and unoffending life, in close retirement. "Lately, however," said Bolingbroke, "I have learnt that the old spirit has revived, and I accidentally heard, three days ago, when conversing with one well informed on state matters, that this most pure administration have discovered some plot or plots with which Montreuil is connected; I believe he will be apprehended in a few days."

"And where lurks he?"

"He was, I heard, last seen in the neighborhood of your brother's property at Devereux Court, and I imagine it probable that he is still in that neighborhood."

This intelligence made me resolve to leave Dawley even earlier than I had intended, and I signified to Lord Bolingbroke my intention of quitting him by sunrise the next morning. He endeavored in vain to combat my resolution. I was too fearful lest Montreuil, hearing of his danger from the state, might baffle my vengeance by seeking some impenetrable asylum, to wish to subject my meeting with him, and with Gerald, whose co-operation I desired, to any unnecessary delay. I took leave of my host therefore that night, and ordered my carriage to be in readiness by the first dawn of morning.

CHAPTER VII.

The Plot approaches its Dénouement.

ALTHOUGH the details of my last chapter have somewhat retarded the progress of that *dénouement* with which this volume is destined to close, yet I do not think the destined reader will regret lingering over a scene in which, after years of restless enterprise and exile, he beholds the asylum which fortune had prepared for the most extraordinary character with which I have adorned these pages.

It was before daybreak that I commenced my journey. The shutters of the house were as yet closed; the gray mists rising slowly from the earth, and the cattle couched beneath the trees, the cold, but breezeless freshness of the morning, the silence of the unawakened birds, all gave an inexpressible stillness and quiet to the scene. The horses slowly ascended a little eminence, and I looked from the window of the carriage, on the peaceful retreat I had left. I sighed as I did so, and a sick sensation, coupled with the thought of Isora, came chill upon my heart. No man happily placed in this social world, can guess the feelings of envy with which a wanderer like me, without tie or home, and for whom the roving eagerness of youth is over, surveys those sheltered spots in which the breast garners up all domestic bonds, its household and holiest delights; the companioned hearth, the smile of infancy, and dearer than all, the eye that glasses our

* This beautiful sentiment is to be found, with very slight alteration, in a letter from Bolingbroke to Swift. —ED.

purest, our tenderest, our most secret thoughts; these,—oh, none who enjoy them know how they for whom they are not have pined and mourned for them!

I had not travelled many hours, when, upon the loneliest part of the road, my carriage, which had borne me without an accident from Rome to London, broke down. The postilions said there was a small inn about a mile from the spot; thither I repaired: a blacksmith was sent for, and I found the accident to the carriage would require several hours to repair. No solitary chaise did the inn afford; but the landlord, who was a freeholder and a huntsman, boasted one valuable and swift horse, which he declared was fit for an emperor or a highwayman. I was too impatient of delay not to grasp at this intelligence. I gave mine host whatever he demanded for the loan of his steed, transferred my pistols to an immense pair of holsters, which adorned a high demi-pique saddle, wherewith he obliged me, and, within an hour from the date of the accident, re-commenced my journey.

The evening closed, as I became aware of the presence of a fellow traveller. He was, like myself, on horseback. He wore a short, dark gray cloak, a long wig of a raven hue, and a large hat, which, flapping over his face, conspired, with the increasing darkness, to allow me a very imperfect survey of his features. Twice or thrice he had passed me, and always with some salutation, indicative of a desire for further acquaintance; but my mood is not naturally too much inclined to miscellaneous society, and I was at that time peculiarly covetous of my own companionship. I had, therefore, given but a brief answer to the horseman's courtesy, and had ridden away from him with a very unceremonious abruptness. At length, when he had come up to me for the fourth time, and for the fourth time had accosted me, my ear caught something in the tones of his voice which did not seem to me wholly unfamiliar. I regarded him with more attention than I had as yet done, and replied to him more civilly and at length. Apparently encouraged by this relaxation from my reserve, the man speedily resumed.

"Your horse, sir," said he, "is a fine animal, but he seems jaded:—you have ridden far to-day, I'll venture to guess."

"I have, sir; but the town where I shall pass the night is not above four miles distant, I believe."

"Hum—ha!—you sleep at D——, then?" said the horseman inquisitively.

A suspicion came across me—we were then entering a very lonely road, and one notoriously infested with highwaymen. My fellow equestrian's company might have some sinister meaning in it. I looked to my holsters, and leisurely taking out one of my pistols, saw to its priming, and returned it to its depositary. The horseman noted the motion, and he moved his horse rather uneasily, and I thought timidly, to the other side of the road.

"You travel well armed, sir," said he, after a pause.

"It is a necessary precaution, sir," answered I, composedly, "in a road one is not familiar with, and with companions one has never had the happiness to meet before."

"Ahem! — ahem! — *Parbleu, Monsieur le Comte*, you allude to me; but I warrant this is not the first time *we* have met."

"Ha!" said I, riding closer to my fellow traveller, "you know me then—and we *have* met before. I thought I recognized your voice, but I cannot remember when or where I last heard it."

"Oh, Count, I believe it was only by accident that we commenced acquaintanceship, and only by accident, you see, do we now resume it. But I perceive that I intrude on your solitude. Farewell, Count, and a pleasant night at your inn."

"Not so fast, sir," said I, laying firm hand on my companion's shoulder, "I know you now, and I thank Providence that I have found you. Marie Oswald, it is not lightly that I will part with you!"

"With all my heart, sir, with all my heart. But *morbleu, Monsieur le Comte*, do take your hand from my shoulder—I am a nervous man, and your pistols are loaded—and perhaps you are choleric and hasty. I assure you I am far from wishing to part with you abruptly, for I have watched you for the last two days, in order to enjoy the honor of this interview."

"Indeed! your wish will save both of us a world of trouble. I believe you may serve me effectually—if so, you will find me more desirous and more able than ever to show my gratitude."

"Sir, you are too good," quoth Mr. Oswald,

with an air far more respectful than he had yet shown me. "Let us make to your inn, and there I shall be most happy to receive your commands." So saying, Marie pushed on his horse, and I urged my own to the same expedition.

"But tell me," said I, as we rode on, "why you have wished to meet me?—me whom you so cruelly deserted and forsook?"

"Oh, *parbleu*—spare me there! it was not I who deserted you—I was compelled to fly—death—murder—on one side;—safety, money, and a snug place in Italy, as a lay-brother of the Institute, on the other! What could I do?—You were ill in bed—not likely to recover—not able to protect me from my present peril—in a state that in all probability never would require my services for the future. Oh, Monsieur le Comte, it was not desertion—that is a cruel word—it was self-preservation, and common prudence."

"Well," said I, complaisantly, "you apply words better than I applied them. And how long have you been returned to England?"

"Some few weeks, Count, not more. I was in London when you arrived—I heard of that event—I immediately repaired to your hotel—you were gone to my Lord Bolingbroke's—I followed you thither—you had left Dawley when I arrived there—I learnt your route and followed you. *Parbleu* and *morbleu*, I find you, and you take me for a highwayman!"

"Pardon my mistake: the clearest sighted men are subject to commit such errors, and the most innocent to suffer by them. So Montreuil *persuaded* you to leave England—did he also persuade you to return?"

"No—I was charged by the Institute with messages to him and others. But we are near the town, Count, let us defer our conversation till then."

We entered D——, put up our horses, called for an apartment—to which summons Oswald added another for wine—and then the virtuous *Marie* commenced his explanations. I was deeply anxious to ascertain whether Gerald had ever been made acquainted with the fraud by which he had obtained possession of the estates of Devereux; and I found that, from Desmarais, Oswald had learned all that had occurred to Gerald since Marie had left England. From Oswald's prolix communication, I ascertained that Gerald was, during the whole of the interval between my uncle's death and my departure from England, utterly unacquainted with the fraud of the will. He readily believed that my uncle had found good reason for altering his intentions with respect to me; and my law proceedings, and violent conduct towards himself, only excited his indignation, not aroused his suspicions. During this time, he lived entirely in the country, indulging the rural hospitality and the rustic sports which he especially affected, and secretly, but deeply, involved with Montreuil in political intrigues. All this time the Abbe made no farther use of him than to borrow whatever sums he required for his purposes. Isora's death, and the confused story of the document given me by Oswald, Montreuil had interpreted to Gerald according to the interpretation of the world; viz., he had thrown the suspicion upon Oswald, as a common villain, who had taken advantage of my credulity about the will—introduced himself into the house on that pretence—attempted the robbery of the most valuable articles therein—which, indeed, he had succeeded in abstracting—and who, on my awaking and contesting with him and his accomplice, had, in self-defence, inflicted the wounds which had ended in my delirium, and Isora's death. This part of my tale Montreuil never contradicted, and Gerald believed it to the present day. The affair of 1715 occurred; the government, aware of Gerald's practices, had anticipated his design of joining the rebels—he was imprisoned—no act of overt guilt on his part was proved, or at least brought forward—and the government not being willing, perhaps, to proceed to violent measures against a very young man, and the head of a very powerful house, connected with more than thirty branches of the English hereditary nobility, he received his acquittal just before Sir William Wyndham, and some other suspected tories, received their own.

Prior to the breaking out of that rebellion, and on the eve of Montreuil's departure for Scotland, the priest summoned Desmarais, whom, it will be remembered, I had previously dismissed, and whom Montreuil had since employed in various errands, and informed him that he had obtained, for his services, the same post under Gerald which the Fatalist had filled under me. Soon after the failure of the rebellion, Devereux Court was destroyed by accidental fire; and Montreuil, who had

come over in disguise, in order to renew his attacks on my brother's coffers (attacks to which Gerald yielded very sullenly, and with many assurances that he would no more incur the danger of political and seditious projects), now advised Gerald to go up to London, and, in order to avoid the suspicion of the government, to mix freely in the gaieties of the court. Gerald readily consented; for, though internally convinced that the charms of the metropolis were not equal to those of the country, yet he liked change, and Devereux Court being destroyed, he shuddered a little at the idea of rebuilding so enormous a pile. Before Gerald left the old tower (*my tower*) which was alone spared by the flames, and at which he had resided, though without his household, rather than quit a place where there was such "excellent shooting," Montreuil said to Desmarais, "This ungrateful *seigneur de village* already shows himself the niggard; he must know what *we* know—that is our only sure hold of him—but he must not know it yet,"—and he proceeded to observe that it was for the hot-beds of courtly luxury to mellow and hasten an opportunity for the disclosure. He instructed Desmarais to see that Gerald (whom even a valet, at least one so artful as Desmarais, might easily influence,) partook to excess of every pleasure,—at least of every pleasure which a gentleman might, without derogation to his dignity, enjoy. Gerald went to town, and very soon became all that Montreuil desired.

Montreuil came again to England; his great project, Alberoni's project, had failed. Banished France and Spain, and excluded Italy, he was desirous of obtaining an asylum in England, until he could negotiate a return to Paris. For the first of these purposes (the asylum) interest was requisite; for the latter (the negotiation) money was desirable. He came to seek both these necessaries in Gerald Devereux. Gerald had already arrived at that prosperous state when money is not lightly given away. A dispute arose; and Montreuil raised the veil, and showed the heir on what terms his estates were held.

Rightly Montreuil had read the human heart. So long as Gerald lived in the country, and tasted not the full enjoyments of his great wealth, it would have been highly perilous to have made this disclosure; for, though Gerald had no great love for me, and was bold enough to run any danger, yet he was neither a Desmarais nor a Montreuil. He was that most capricious thing, a man of honor; and at that day, he would instantly have given up the estate to me, and Montreuil and the philosopher to the hangman. But, after two or three years of every luxury that wealth could purchase—after living in those circles, too, where wealth is the highest possible merit, and public opinion, therefore, only honors the rich, fortune became far more valuable, and the conscience far less nice. Living at Devereux Court, Gerald had only 30,000*l.* a year; living in London, he had all that 30,000*l.* a year can purchase; a very great difference this indeed! Honor is a fine bulwark against a small force; but, unbacked by other principle, it is seldom well manned enough to resist a large one. When, therefore, Montreuil showed Gerald that he could lose his estate in an instant—that the world would never give him credit for innocence, when guilt would have conferred on him such advantages—that he would therefore part with all those *et cætera* which, now in the very prime of life, made his whole idea of human enjoyments—that he would no longer be the rich, the powerful, the honored, the magnificent, the envied, the idolized lord of thousands, but would sink at once into a younger brother, dependent on the man he most hated for his very subsistence—since his debts would greatly exceed his portion—and an object through life of contemptuous pity, or of covert suspicion—that all this change could happen at a word of Montreuil's, what wonder that he should be staggered,—should hesitate, and yield? Montreuil obtained then, whatever sums he required; and, through Gerald's influence, pecuniary and political, procured from the minister a tacit permission for him to remain in England, under an assumed name, and in close retirement. Since then, Montreuil (though secretly involved in treasonable practices) had appeared to busy himself solely in negotiating a pardon at Paris. Gerald had lived the life of a man who, if he has parted with peace of conscience, will make the best of the bargain, by procuring every kind of pleasure in exchange; and *le petit* Jean Desmarais, useful to both priest and spendthrift, had passed his time very agreeably—laughing at his employers, studying philosophy, and filling his pockets; for I need scarcely

add that Gerald forgave him without much difficulty for his share in the forgery. A man, as Oswald shrewdly observed, is seldom inexorable to those crimes by which he has profited. "And where lurks Montreuil now?" I asked; "in the neighborhood of Devereux Court?"

Oswald looked at me with some surprise. "How learned you that, sir? It is true. He lives quietly and privately in that vicinity. The woods around the house, the caves in the beach, and the little isle opposite the castle, afford him in turn an asylum; and the convenience with which correspondence with France can be there carried on makes the scene of his retirement peculiarly adapted to his purposes."

I now began to question Oswald respecting himself; for I was not warmly inclined to place implicit trust in the services of a man who had before shown himself at once mercenary and timid. There was little cant or disguise about that gentleman; he made few pretences to virtues which he did not possess; and he seemed now, both by wine and familiarity, peculiarly disposed to be frank. It was he who in Italy (among various other and less private commissions) had been appointed by Montreuil to watch over Aubrey; on my brother's death, he had hastened to England, not only to apprise Montreuil of that event, but charged with some especial orders to him from certain members of the Institute. He had found Montreuil, busy, restless, intriguing, even in seclusion, and cheered by a recent promise, from Fleuri himself, that he should speedily obtain pardon and recall.

It was, at this part of Oswald's story, easy to perceive the causes of his renewed confidence in me. Montreuil, engaged in new plans and schemes, at once complicated and vast, paid but a slight attention to the wrecks of his past projects. Aubrey dead—myself abroad—Gerald at his command—he perceived, in our House, no cause for caution or alarm. This, apparently, rendered him less careful of retaining the venal services of Oswald, than his knowledge of character should have made him; and when that gentleman, then in London, accidentally heard of my sudden arrival in this country, he at once perceived how much more to his interest it would be to serve me than to maintain an ill-remunerated fidelity to Montreuil. In fact, as I have since learned, the priest's discretion was less to blame than I then imagined; for Oswald was of a remarkably impudent, profligate, and spendthrift turn; and his demands for money were considerably greater than the value of his services; or perhaps, as Montreuil thought, when Aubrey no longer lived, than the consequence of his silence.

When, therefore, I spoke seriously to my new ally of my desire of wreaking ultimate justice on the crimes of Montreuil, I found that his zeal was far from being chilled by my determination—nay, the very cowardice of the man made him ferocious; and the moment he resolved to betray Montreuil, his fears of the priest's vengeance made him eager to destroy where he betrayed. I am not addicted to unnecessary procrastination. Of the unexpected evidence I had found I was most eager to avail myself. I saw at once how considerably Oswald's testimony would lessen any difficulty I might have in an explanation with Gerald, as well as in bringing Montreuil to justice: and the former measure seemed to me necessary to ensure, or at least to expedite, the latter. I proposed, therefore, to Oswald, that he should immediately accompany me to the house in which Gerald was then a visitor; the honest Marie, conditioning only for another bottle, which he termed a travelling comforter, readily acceded to my wish. I immediately procured a chaise and horses; and in less than two hours from the time we entered the inn, we were on the road to Gerald. What an impulse to the wheel of destiny had the event of that one day given!

At another time, I might have gleaned amusement from the shrewd roguery of my companion, but he found me then but a dull listener. I served him, in truth, as men of his stamp are ordinarily served: so soon as I had extracted from him whatever was meet for present use, I favored him with little farther attention. He had exhausted all the communications it was necessary for me to know; so, in the midst of a long story about Italy, Jesuits, and the wisdom of Marie Oswald, I affected to fall asleep; my companion soon followed my example in earnest, and left me to meditate, undisturbed, over all that I had heard, and over the schemes now the most promising of success. I soon taught myself to look with a lenient eye on Gerald's after-connivance in

Montreuil's forgery; and I felt that I owed to my surviving brother so large an arrear of affection for the long injustice I had rendered him, that I was almost pleased to find something set upon the opposite score. All men, perhaps, would rather forgive than be forgiven. I resolved, therefore, to affect ignorance of Gerald's knowledge of the forgery; and even should he confess it, to exert all my art to steal from the confession its shame. From this train of reflection my mind soon directed itself to one far fiercer and more intense; and I felt my heart pause, as if congealing into marble, when I thought of Montreuil and anticipated justice.

It was nearly noon on the following day when we arrived at Lord ——'s house. We found that Gerald had left it the day before, for the enjoyment of the field-sports at Devereux Court, and thither we instantly proceeded.

It has often seemed to me that if there be, as certain ancient philosophers fabled, one certain figure pervading all nature, human and universal, it is *the circle.* Round, in one vast monotony, one eternal gyration, roll the orbs of space. Thus moves the spirit of created life, kindling, progressing, maturing, decaying, perishing, reviving and rolling again, and so onward forever through the same course; and thus even would seem to revolve the mysterious mechanism of human events and actions. Age, ere it returns to "the second childishness, the mere oblivion" from which it passes to the grave, returns also to the memories and the thoughts of youth; its buried loves arise—its past friendships rekindle. The wheels of the tired machine are past the meridian, and the arch through which they now decline, has a correspondent likeness to the opposing segment through which they had borne upward in eagerness and triumph. Thus it is, too, that we bear within us an irresistible attraction to our earliest home. Thus it is that we say, "It matters not where our mid-course is run, but we will *die* in the place where we were born —in the point of space whence *began* the circle, there also shall *it end!*" This is the grand orbit through which Mortality passes only once; but the same figure may pervade all through which it moves on its journey to the grave. Thus, one peculiar day of the round year has been to some an era, always coloring life with an event. Thus, to others, some peculiar place has been the theatre of strange action, influencing all existence, whenever, in the recurrence of destiny, that place has been revisited. Thus was it said by an arch-sorcerer of old, whose labors yet exist, though perhaps, at the moment I write, there are not three living beings who know of their existence—that there breathes not that man who would not find, did he minutely investigate the events of life, that, in some fixed and distinct spot, or hour, or person, there lived, though shrouded and obscure, the pervading demon of his fate; and whenever, in their several paths, the two circles of being touched, that moment made the unnoticed epoch of coming prosperity or evil. I remember well that this bewildering, yet not unsolemn reflection, or rather fancy, was in my mind, as, after the absence of many years, I saw myself hastening to the home of my boyhood, and cherishing the fiery hope of there avenging the doom of that love which I had there conceived.

Deeply, and in silence, did I brood over the dark shapes which my thoughts engendered; and I woke not from my reverie till, as the gray of the evening closed around us, we entered the domains of Devereux Court. The road was rough and stony, and the horses moved slowly on. How familiar was everything before me? the old pollards which lay scattered in dense groups on either side, and which had lived on from heir to heir, secure in the little temptation they afforded to cupidity, seemed to greet me with a silent, but intelligible welcome. Their leaves fell around us in the autumn air, and the branches, as they waved towards me, seemed to say, "Thou art returned, and thy change is like our own: the green leaves of *thy* heart have fallen from thee one by one—like us thou survivest, but thou art desolate!" The hoarse cry of the rooks gathering to their rest, came fraught with the music of young associations on my ear. Many a time in the laughing spring had I lain in these groves, watching, in the young brood of those citizens of air, a mark for my childish skill and careless disregard of life. We acquire mercy as we acquire thought—I would not *now* have harmed one of those sable creatures for a king's ransom!

As we cleared the more wooded belt of the park, and entered the smooth space, on which the trees stood alone and at rarer intervals,

while the red clouds, still tinged with the hues of the departed sun, hovered on the far and upland landscape — like Hope flushing over Futurity—a mellowed, yet rapid murmur, distinct from the more distant dashing of the sea, broke abruptly upon my ear. It was the voice of that brook whose banks had been the dearest haunt of my childhood; and now, as it burst thus suddenly upon me, I longed to be alone, that I might have bowed down my head and wept as if it had been the welcome of a living thing! At once, and as by a word, the hardened lava, the congealed stream of the soul's Etna, was uplifted from my memory, and the bowers and palaces of old, the world of a gone day, lay before me! With how wild an enthusiasm had I apostrophized that stream on the day in which I first resolved to leave its tranquil regions and fragrant margin for the tempest and tumult of the world. On that same eve, too, had Aubrey and I taken sweet counsel together—on that same eve had we sworn to protect, to love, and to cherish one another!—AND NOW!—I saw the very mound on which we had sat—a solitary deer made it his couch, and, as the carriage approached, the deer rose, and I then saw that he had been wounded, perhaps in some contest with his tribe, and that he could scarcely stir from the spot. I turned my face away, and the remains of my ancestral house rose gradually in view. That house was indeed changed; a wide and black heap of ruins spread around; the vast hall, with its oaken rafters and huge hearth, was no more—I missed *that*, and I cared not for the rest. The long galleries, the superb chambers, the scenes of revelry or of pomp, were like the court companions who amuse, yet attach us not; but the hall—the old hall—the old, hospitable hall—had been as a friend in all seasons, and to all comers, and its mirth had been as open to all as the heart of its last owner! My eyes wandered from the place where it had been, and the tall, lone, gray tower, consecrated to my ill-fated namesake, and in which my own apartments had been situated, rose, like the last of a warrior band, stern, gaunt, and solitary, over the ruins around.

The carriage now passed more rapidly over the neglected road, and wound where the ruins, cleared on either side, permitted access to the tower. In two minutes more I was in the same chamber with my only surviving brother. Oh, why—why can I not dwell upon that scene—that embrace, that reconciliation?—alas! the wound is not yet scarred over.

I found Gerald, at first, haughty and sullen; he expected my reproaches and defiance—against them he was hardened; he was not prepared for my prayers for our future friendship, and my grief for our past enmity, and he melted at once!

But let me hasten over this. I had well nigh forgot that, at the close of my history, I should find one remembrance so endearing, and one pang so keen. Rapidly I sketched to Gerald the ill fate of Aubrey; but lingeringly did I dwell upon Montreuil's organized, and most baneful, influence over him, and over us all; and I endeavored to arouse in Gerald some sympathy with my own deep indignation against that villain. I succeeded so far as to make him declare that he was scarcely less desirous of justice than myself; but there was an embarrassment in his tone of which I was at no loss to perceive the cause. To accuse Montreuil publicly of his forgery might ultimately bring to light Gerald's latter knowledge of the fraud. I hastened to say that there was now no necessity to submit to a court of justice a scrutiny into our private, gloomy, and eventful records. No, from Oswald's communictions I had learned enough to prove that Bolingbroke had been truly informed, and that Montreuil had still, and within the few last weeks, been deeply involved in schemes of treason—full proof of which could be adduced, far more than sufficient to ensure his death by the public executioner. Upon this charge I proposed at the nearest town (the memorable seaport of * * * *) to accuse him, and to obtain a warrant for his immediate apprehension—upon this charge I proposed alone to proceed against him, and by it alone to take justice upon his more domestic crimes.

My brother yielded at last his consent to my suggestions. "I understand," said I, "that Montreuil lurks in the neighborhood of these ruins, or in the opposite islet. Know you if he has made his asylum in either at this present time?"

"No, my brother," answered Gerald, "but I have reason to believe that he is in our immediate vicinity, for I received a letter from him three days ago, when at Lord ——'s, urging a request that I would give him a

meeting here, at my earliest leisure, previous to his leaving England."

"Has he really then obtained permission to return to France?"

"Yes," replied Gerald, "he informed me in this letter that he had just received intelligence of his pardon."

"May it fit him the better," said I, with a stern smile, "for a more lasting condemnation. But if this be true we have not a moment to lose: a man so habitually vigilant and astute will speedily learn my visit hither, and forfeit even his appointment with you, should he, which is likely enough, entertain any suspicion of our reconciliation with each other—moreover, he may hear that the government have discovered his designs, and may instantly secure the means of flight. Let me, therefore, immediately repair to * * * *, and obtain a warrant against him, as well as officers to assist our search. In the meanwhile you shall remain here, and detain him, should he visit you;—but where is the accomplice?—let us seize *him* instantly, for I conclude he is with you!"

"What, Desmarais?" rejoined Gerald. "Yes, he is the only servant, beside the old portress, which these poor ruins will allow me to entertain in the same dwelling with myself: the rest of my suite are left behind at Lord ——'s. But Desmarais is not now within; he went out about two hours ago."

"Ha!" said I, "in all likelihood to meet the priest—shall we wait his return, and extort some information of Montreuil's lurking-hole?"

Before Gerald could answer, we heard a noise without, and presently I distinguished the bland tones of the hypocritical Fatalist, in soft expostulation with the triumphant voice of Mr. Marie Oswald. I hastened out, and discovered that the lay-brother, whom I had left in the chaise, having caught a glimpse of the valet gliding among the ruins, had recognized, seized, and by the help of the postilions, dragged him to the door of the tower. The moment Desmarais saw me, he ceased to struggle: he met my eye with a steady, but not disrespectful, firmness; he changed not even the habitual hue of his countenance—he remained perfectly still in the hands of his arresters; and if there was any vestige of his mind discoverable in his sallow features and glittering eye, it was not the sign of fear, or confusion, or even surprise; but a ready promptness to meet danger, coupled, perhaps, with a little doubt whether to defy or to seek first to diminish it.

Long did I gaze upon him—struggling with internal rage and loathing—the mingled contempt and desire of destruction with which we gaze upon the erect aspect of some small, but venomous and courageous reptile—long did I gaze upon him before I calmed and collected my voice to speak—

"So I have *thee* at last! First comes the base tool, and that will I first break, before I lop off the guiding hand."

"So please Monsieur my Lord the Count," answered Desmarais, bowing to the ground; "the tool is a file, and it would be useless to bite against it."

"We will see that," said I, drawing my sword: "prepare to die!" and I pointed the blade to his throat with so sudden and menacing a gesture that his eyes closed involuntarily, and the blood left his thin cheek as white as ashes: but he shrank not.

"If Monsieur," said he, with a sort of smile, "*will* kill his poor old, faithful servant, let him strike. Fate is not to be resisted; and prayers are useless!"

"Oswald," said I, "release your prisoner; wait here, and keep strict watch. Jean Desmarais, follow me!"

I ascended the stairs, and Desmarais followed. "Now," I said, when he was alone with Gerald and myself, "your days are numbered: you will fall; not by my hand, but by that of the executioner. Not only your forgery, but your robbery, your abetment of murder, are known to me; your present lord, with an indignation equal to my own, surrenders you to justice. Have you aught to urge, not in defence—for to that I will not listen—but in atonement? *Can* you now commit any act which will cause me to forego justice on those which you *have* committed?" Desmarais hesitated. "Speak," said I. He raised his eyes to mine with an inquisitive and wistful look.

"Monsieur," said the wretch, with his obsequious smile, "Monsieur has travelled—has shone—has succeeded—Monsieur must have made enemies: let him name them, and his poor old *faithful* servant will do his best to become the humble instrument of their *fate!*"

Gerald drew himself aside, and shuddered.

Perhaps till then he had not been fully aware how slyly murder, as well as fraud, can lurk beneath urbane tones and laced ruffles.

"I have no enemy," said I, "but one; and the hangman will do my office upon him; but point out to me the exact spot where at this moment he is concealed, and you shall have full leave to quit this country for ever. That enemy is Julian Montreuil!"

"Ah, ah!" said Desmarais, musingly, and in a tone very different from that in which he usually spoke; "must it be so, indeed? For twenty years of youth and manhood, I have clung to that man, and woven my destiny with his, because I believed him born under the star which shines on statesmen and on pontiffs. Does dread Necessity now impel me to betray him?—Him, the only man I ever loved. So—so—so! Count Devereux, strike me to the core—I will *not* betray Bertrand Collinot!"

"Mysterious heart of man," I exclaimed inly, as I gazed upon the low brow, the malignant eye, the crafty lip of this wretch, who still retained one generous and noble sentiment at the bottom of so base a breast. But if it sprung there, it only sprung to wither!

"As thou wilt," said I; "remember, death is the alternative. By thy birth-star, Jean Desmarais, I should question whether perfidy be not *better luck* than hanging—but time speeds—farewell; I shall meet thee on thy day of trial."

I turned to the door to summon Oswald to his prisoner. Desmarais roused himself from the reverie in which he appeared to have sunk.

"Why do I doubt?" said he, slowly. "Were the alternative his, would he not hang me as he would hang his dog if it went mad and menaced danger? My very noble and merciful master," continued the Fatalist, turning to me, and relapsing into his customary manner, "it is enough! I can refuse nothing to a gentleman who has such insinuating manners. Montreuil *may be* in your power this night; but that rests solely with me. If I speak not, a few hours will place him irrevocably beyond your reach. If I betray him to you, will Monsieur swear that I shall have my pardon for past *errors?*"

"On condition of leaving England," I answered, for slight was my comparative desire of justice against Desmarais; and since I had agreed with Gerald not to bring our domestic records to the glare of day, justice against Desmarais was not easy of attainment; while, on the other hand, so precarious seemed the chance of discovering Montreuil before he left England, without certain intelligence of his movements, that I was willing to forego any less ardent feeling, for the speedy gratification of that which made the sole surviving passion of my existence.

"Be it so," rejoined Desmarais; "there is better wine in France! And Monsieur, my present master—Monsieur Gerald, will you too pardon your poor Desmarais for his proof of the great attachment he always bore to you?"

"Away, wretch!" cried Gerald, shrinking back; "your villany taints the very air!"

Desmarais lifted his eyes to Heaven, with a look of appealing innocence; but I was wearied with this odious farce.

"The condition is made," said I: "remember, it only holds good if Montreuil's person is placed in our power. Now explain."

"This night, then," answered Desmarais, "Montreuil proposes to leave England by means of a French privateer, or pirate, if that word please you better. Exactly at the hour of twelve, he will meet some of the sailors upon the seashore, by the Castle Cave; thence they proceed in boats to the islet, off which the pirate's vessel awaits them. If you would seize Montreuil, you must provide a force adequate to conquer the companions he will meet. The rest is with you; my part is fulfilled."

"Remember! I repeat if this be one of thy inventions, thou wilt hang."

"I have said what is true," said Desmarais, bitterly; "and were not life so very pleasant to me, I would sooner have met the rack."

I made no reply; but summoning Oswald, surrendered Desmarais to his charge. I then held a hasty consultation with Gerald, whose mind, however, obscured by feelings of gloomy humiliation, and stunned perhaps by the sudden and close following order of events, gave me but little assistance in my projects. I observed his feelings with great pain; but that was no moment for wrestling with them. I saw that I could not depend upon his vigorous co-operation; and that even if Montreuil sought him, he might want the presence of mind and the energy to detain my enemy. I changed therefore the arrangement we had first proposed.

"I will remain here," said I, "and I will in-

struct the old portress to admit to me any one who seeks audience with you. Meanwhile, Oswald and yourself, if you will forgive, and grant my request to that purport, will repair to * * * *, and, informing the magistrate of our intelligence, procure such armed assistance as may give battle to the pirates, should that be necessary, and succeed in securing Montreuil; this assistance may be indispensable; at all events, it will be prudent to secure it: perhaps for Oswald alone, the magistrates would not use that zeal and expedition, which a word *of yours* can command."

"Of mine," said Gerald, "say rather of yours; you are the lord of these broad lands!"

"Never, my dearest brother, shall they pass to me from their present owner; but let us hasten now to execute justice, we will talk afterwards of friendship."

I then sought Oswald, who, if a physical coward, was morally a ready, bustling and prompt man; and I felt that I could rely more upon him than I could at that moment upon Gerald: I released him therefore of his charge, and made Desmarais a close prisoner, in the inner apartment of the tower; I then gave Oswald the most earnest injunctions to procure the assistance we might require, and to return with it as expeditiously as possible: and cheered by the warmth and decision of his answer, I saw him depart with Gerald, and felt my heart beat high with the anticipation of midnight and retribution.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Catastrophe.

It happened unfortunately, that the mission to * * * * was indispensable. The slender accommodation of the tower forbade Gerald the use of his customary attendants, and the neighboring villagers were too few in number, and too ill provided with weapons, to encounter men cradled in the very lap of danger; moreover, it was requisite, above all things, that no rumor or suspicion of our intended project should obtain wind, and, by reaching Montreuil's ears, give him some safer opportunity of escape. I had no doubt of the sincerity of the Fatalist's communication, and if I had, the subsequent conversation I held with him, when Gerald and Oswald were gone, would have been sufficient to remove it. He was evidently deeply stung by the reflection of his own treachery, and singularly enough, with Montreuil seemed to perish all his worldly hopes and aspirations. Desmarais, I found, was a man of much higher ambition than I had imagined, and he had linked himself closely to Montreuil, because, from the genius and the resolution of the priest, he had drawn the most sanguine auguries of his future power. As the night advanced, he grew visibly anxious, and, having fully satisfied myself that I might count indisputably upon his intelligence, I once more left him to his meditations, and, alone in the outer chamber, I collected myself for the coming event. I had fully hoped that Montreuil would have repaired to the tower in search of Gerald, and this was the strongest reason which had induced me to remain behind: but time waned, he came not, and at length it grew so late that I began to tremble lest the assistance from * * * * should not arrive in time.

It struck, the first quarter after eleven: in less than an hour my enemy would be either in my power, or beyond its reach; still Gerald and our allies came not—my suspense grew intolerable, my pulse raged with fever; I could not stay for two seconds in the same spot; a hundred times had I drawn my sword, and looked eagerly along its bright blade. "Once," thought I, as I looked, "thou didst cross the blade of my mortal foe, and to my danger, rather than victory; years have brought skill to the hand which then guided thee, and in the red path of battle thou hast never waved in vain. Be stained but once more with human blood, and I will prize every drop of that blood beyond all the triumphs thou hast brought me!" Yes, it had been with a fiery and intense delight that I had learned that Montreuil would have companions to his flight in lawless and hardened men, who would never yield him a prisoner without striking for his rescue; and I knew enough of the courageous and proud temper of my purposed victim to feel assured that, priest as he was, he would not hesitate to avail himself of the weapons of his confederates, or to aid them with his own. Then would it be lawful to oppose violence to his resistance, and with my own hand to deal the death-blow of retribution. Still as these thoughts flashed

over me, my heart grew harder, and my blood rolled more burningly through my veins. "They come not, Gerald returns not," I said, as my eye dwelt on the clock, and saw the minutes creep one after the other—"it matters not—HE at least shall not escape!—were he girt by a million, I would single him from the herd; one stroke of this right hand is all that I ask of life, then let them avenge him if they will." Thus resolved, and despairing at last of the return of Gerald, I left the tower, locked the outer door, as a still further security against my prisoner's escape, and repaired with silent, but swift, strides to the beach by the Castle Cave.

It wanted about half an hour to midnight; the night was still and breathless, a dim mist spread from sea to sky, through which the stars gleamed forth heavily, and at distant intervals. The moon was abroad, but the vapors that surrounded her gave a watery and sicklied dulness to her light, and wherever, in the niches and hollows of the cliff, the shadows fell, all was utterly dark, and unbroken by the smallest ray: only along the near waves of the sea, and the whiter parts of the level sand, were objects easily discernible. I strode to and fro, for a few minutes, before the Castle Cave; I saw no one, and I seated myself in stern vigilance upon a stone, in a worn recess of the rock, and close by the mouth of the Castle Cave. The spot where I sat was wrapt in total darkness, and I felt assured that I might wait my own time for disclosing myself. I had not been many minutes at my place of watch before I saw the figure of a man approach from the left; he moved with rapid steps, and once when he passed along a place where the wan light of the skies was less obscured I saw enough of his form and air to recognize Montreuil. He neared the Cave—he paused—he was within a few paces of me—I was about to rise, when another figure suddenly glided from the mouth of the Cave itself.

"Ha!" cried the latter, "it is Bertrand Collinot—Fate be lauded!"

Had a voice from the grave struck my ear, it would have scarcely amazed me more than that which I now heard. Could I believe my senses? the voice was that of Desmarais, whom I had left locked within the inner chamber of the tower. "Fly," he resumed, "fly instantly; you have not a moment to lose—already the stern Morton waits thee—already the hounds of justice are on thy track, tarry not for the pirates, but begone at once."

"You rave, man! What mean you? the boats will be here immediately. While you yet speak methinks I can descry them on the sea. Something of this I dreaded when, some hours ago, I caught a glimpse of Gerald on the road to * * * *. I saw not the face of his companion, but I would not trust myself in the tower—yet I must await the boats—flight is indeed requisite, but *they* make the only means by which flight is safe!"

"Pray, then, thou who believest, pray that they may come soon, or thou diest—and I with thee! Morton is returned—is reconciled to his weak brother. Gerald and Oswald are away to * * * *, for men to seize and drag thee to a public death. I was arrested—threatened; but one way to avoid prison and cord was shown me. Curse me, Bertrand, for I embraced it. I told them thou would'st fly tonight, and with whom. They locked me in the inner chamber of the tower—Morton kept guard without. At length I heard him leave the room—I heard him descend the stairs, and lock the gate of the tower. Ha! ha! little dreamt he of the wit of Jean Desmarais. *Thy* friend must scorn bolt and bar, Bertrand Collinot. They had not searched me—I used my instruments—thou knowest that with those instruments I could glide through stone walls!—I opened the door—I was in the outer room—I lifted the trap-door which old Sir William had had boarded over, and which thou hadst so artfully and imperceptibly replaced, when thou wantedst secret intercourse with thy pupils—I sped along the passage—came to the iron door—touched the spring thou hadst inserted in the plate which the old knight had placed over the key-hole—and have come to repair my coward treachery—to save and to fly with thee. But, while I speak, we tread on a precipice. Morton has left the house, and is even now, perhaps, in search of thee."

"Ha! I care not if he be," said Montreuil, in a low, but haughty tone. "Priest though I am, I have not assumed the garb, without assuming also the weapon, of the layman. Even now I have my hand upon the same sword which shone under the banners of Mar; and which once, but for my foolish mercy, would have rid me for ever of this private foe."

"Unsheath it now, Julian Montreuil!" said I, coming from my retreat, and confronting the pair.

Montreuil recoiled several paces. At that instant a shot boomed along the waters.

"Haste, haste," cried Desmarais, hurrying to the waves, as a boat, now winding the cliff, became darkly visible; "haste, Bertrand, here are Bonjean and his men—but they are pursued!"

Once did Montreuil turn, as if to fly; but my sword was at his breast, and, stamping fiercely on the ground, he drew his rapier, and parried and returned my assault; but he retreated rapidly towards the water while he struck; and wild and loud came the voices from the boat, which now touched the shore.

"Come—come—come—the officers are upon us; we can wait not a moment!" and Montreuil, as he heard the cries, mingled with oaths and curses, yet quickened his pace towards the quarter whence they came. His steps were tracked by his blood—twice had my sword passed through his flesh; but twice had it failed my vengeance, and avoided a mortal part. A second boat, filled also with the pirates, followed the first; but then another and a larger vessel bore black and fast over the water—the rush and cry of men were heard on land—again and nearer a shot broke over the heavy air—another and another—a continued fire. The strand was now crowded with the officers of justice. The vessel beyond forbade escape to the opposite islet. There was no hope for the pirates but in contest, or in dispersion among the cliffs or woods on the shore. They formed their resolution at once, and stood prepared and firm, partly on their boats—partly on the beach around them. Though the officers were far more numerous, the strife—fierce, desperate, and hand to hand—seemed equally sustained. Montreuil, as he retreated before me, bore back into the general *mêlée*, and, as the press thickened, we were for some moments separated. It was at this time that I caught a glimpse of Gerald; *he* seemed also then to espy me, and made eagerly towards me. Suddenly he was snatched from my view. The fray relaxed; the officers, evidently worsted, retreated towards the land, and the pirates appeared once more to entertain the hope of making their escape by water. Probably they thought that the darkness of the night might enable them to baffle the pursuit of the adverse vessel, which now lay expectant and passive on the wave. However this be, they made simultaneously to their boats, and among their numbers, I descried Montreuil. I set my teeth with a calm and prophetic wrath. But three strokes did my good blade make through that throng before I was by his side; he had at that instant his hold upon the boat's edge, and he stood knee-deep in the dashing waters. I laid my grasp upon his shoulder, and my cheek touched his own as I hissed in his ear, "I am with thee yet!" He turned fiercely—he strove, but he strove in vain, to shake off my grasp. The boat pushed away, and his last hope of escape was over. At this moment the moon broke away from the mist, and we saw each other plainly, and face to face. There was a ghastly, but set despair in Montreuil's lofty and proud countenance, which changed gradually to a fiercer aspect, as he met my gaze. Once more, foot to foot, and hand to hand, we engaged; the increased light of the skies rendered the contest more that of skill than it had hitherto been, and Montreuil seemed to collect all his energies, and to fight with a steadier and a cooler determination. Nevertheless the combat was short. Once, my antagonist had the imprudence to raise his arm and expose his body to my thrust: his sword grazed my cheek—I shall bear the scar to my grave—mine passed twice through his breast, and he fell, bathed in his blood, at my feet.

"Lift him!" I said, to the men who now crowded round. They did so, and he unclosed his eyes, and glared upon me as the death-pang convulsed his features, and gathered in foam to his lips. But his thoughts were not upon his destroyer, nor upon the wrongs he had committed, nor upon any solitary being in the linked society which he had injured.

"Order of Jesus," he muttered, "had I but lived three months longer, I—"

So died Julian Montreuil.

Conclusion.

Montreuil was not the only victim in the brief combat of that night; several of the pirates and their pursuers perished, and among the bodies we found Gerald. He had been pierced, by a shot, through the brain, and was perfectly lifeless when his body was discovered. By a sort of retribution, it seems that my unhappy

brother received his death-wound from a shot, fired [probably at random] by Desmarais; and thus the instrument of the fraud he had tacitly subscribed to became the minister of his death. Nay, the retribution seemed even to extend to the very method by which Desmarais had escaped; and, as the reader has perceived, the subterranean communication which had been secretly reopened to deceive my uncle, made the path which had guided Gerald's murderer to the scene which afterwards ensued. The delay of the officers had been owing to private intelligence, previously received by the magistrate to whom Gerald had applied, of the number and force of the pirates, and his waiting in consequence for a military reinforcement to the party to be despatched against them. Those of the pirates who escaped the conflict escaped also the pursuit of the hostile vessel; they reached the islet, and gained their captain's ship. A few shots between the two vessels were idly exchanged, and the illicit adventurers reached the French shore in safety; with them escaped Desmarais, and of him, from that hour to this, I have heard nothing—so capriciously plays Time with villains!

Marie Oswald has lately taken unto himself a noted inn on the North Road, a place eminently calculated for the display of his various talents; he has also taken unto himself a WIFE, of whose tongue and temper he has been known already to complain with no Socratic meekness; and we may therefore opine that his misdeeds have not altogether escaped their fitting share of condemnation.

Succeeding at once, by the death of my poor brother, to the DEVEREUX estates, I am still employed in rebuilding, on a yet more costly scale, my ancestral mansion. So eager and impatient is my desire for the completion of my undertaking, that I allow rest neither by night or day, and half the work will be done by torch-light. With the success of this project terminates my last scheme of Ambition.

Here, then, at the age of thirty-four, I conclude the history of my life. Whether in the star which, as I now write, shines in upon me, and which a romance, still unsubdued, has often dreamed to be the bright prophet of my fate, something of future adventure, suffering, or excitement, is yet predestined to me; or whether life will muse itself away in the solitudes which surround the home of my past childhood, and the scene of my present retreat, creates within me but slight food for anticipation or conjecture. I have exhausted the sources of those feelings which flow, whether through the channels of anxiety or of hope, towards the future; and the restlessness of my manhood, having attained its last object, has done the labor of time, and bequeathed to me the indifference of age.

If love exists for me no longer, I know well that the memory of that which has been is to me far more than a living love is to others; and perhaps there is no passion so full of tender, of soft, and of hallowing associations, as the love which is stamped by death. If I have borne much, and my spirit has worked out its earthly end in travail and in tears, yet I would not forego the lessons which my life has bequeathed me, even though they be deeply blended with sadness and regret. No! were I asked what best dignifies the present, and consecrates the past; what enables us alone to draw a just moral from the tale of life; what sheds the purest light upon our reason; what gives the firmest strength to our religion; and, whether our remaining years pass in seclusion or in action, is best fitted to soften the heart of man, and to elevate the soul to God, I would answer, with Lassus, it is "EXPERIENCE!"

END OF "DEVEREUX."

THE DISOWNED.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

In this edition of a work composed in early youth, I have not attempted to remove those faults of construction which may be sufficiently apparent in the plot: but which could not indeed be thoroughly rectified without re-writing the whole work. I can only hope that with the defects of inexperience, may be found some of the merits of frank and artless enthusiasm. I have, however, lightened the narrative of certain episodical and irrelevant passages, and relieved the general style of some boyish extravagances of diction. At the time this work was written I was deeply engaged in the study of metaphysics and ethics—and out of that study grew the character of Algernon Mordaunt. He is represented as a type of the Heroism of Christian Philosophy — an union of love and knowledge placed in the midst of sorrow, and laboring on through the pilgrimage of life, strong in the fortitude that comes from belief in heaven.

E. B. L.

Knebworth, *May* 3, 1852.

CHAPTER I.

I'll tell you a story if you please to attend.
Limbo, by G. Knight.

It was the evening of a soft, warm day in the May of 17—. The sun had already set, and the twilight was gathering slowly over the large, still masses of wood which lay on either side of one of those green lanes so peculiar to England. Here and there, the outline of the trees irregularly shrunk back from the road, leaving broad patches of waste land covered with fern —and the yellow blossoms of the dwarf furze, and, at more distant intervals, thick clusters of rushes, from which came the small hum of gnats—those "evening revellers"—alternately rising and sinking in the customary manner of their unknown sports—till, as the shadows grew darker and darker, their thin and airy shapes were no longer distinguishable, and no solitary token of life or motion broke the voiceless monotony of the surrounding woods.

The first sound which invaded the silence came from the light, quick footsteps of a person, whose youth betrayed itself in its elastic and unmeasured tread, and in the gay, free carol, which broke out by fits and starts upon the gentle stillness of the evening.

There was something rather indicative of poetical taste than musical science in the selection of this vesper hymn, which always commenced with—

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good green wood,

and never proceeded a syllable farther than the end of the second line,

When birds are about and singing:

from the last word of which, after a brief pause, it invariably started forth into joyous "iteration."

Presently a heavier, yet still more rapid, step than that of the youth was heard behind; and, as it overtook the latter, a loud, clear, good humored voice gave the salutation of the evening. The tone in which this courtesy was returned was frank, distinct, and peculiarly harmonious.

"Good evening, my friend. How far is it to W——? I hope I am not out of the direct road?"

"To W——, sir?" said the man, touching his hat, as he perceived, in spite of the dusk, something in the air and voice of his new acquaintance which called for a greater degree of

THE DISOWNED.

espect than he was at first disposed to accord a pedestrian traveller—"To W——, sir? hy, you will not surely go there to-night: it more than eight miles distant, and the roads one of the best?"

"Now, a curse on all rogues!" quoth the outh with a serious sort of vivacity. "Why, e miller, at the foot of the hill, assured me I ould be at my journey's end in less than an our."

"He may have said right, sir," returned the an, "yet you will not reach W—— in twice at time."

"How do you mean?" said the younger ranger.

"Why that you may for once force a miller speak truth in spite of himself, and make public house, about three miles hence, the d of your day's journey."

"Thank you for the hint," said the youth. Does the house you speak of lie on the road-de?"

"No, sir: the lane branches off about two iles hence, and you must then turn to the ght: but *till* then, our way is the same, and you would not prefer your own company to ine, we can trudge on together."

"With all my heart," rejoined the younger ranger; "and not the less willingly from the isk pace you walk. I thought I had few uals in pedestrianism; but it should not be r a small wager that I would undertake to ep up with you."

"Perhaps, sir," said the man laughing, "I ve had in the course of my life, a better age and a longer experience of my heels than u have."

Somewhat startled by a speech of so equivo-l a meaning, the youth, for the first time, rned round to examine, as well as the in-easing darkness would permit, the size and pearance of his companion. He was not rhaps too well satisfied with his survey. His llow pedestrian was about six feet high, and a correspondent girth of limb and frame, ich would have made him fearful odds in any counter where bodily strength was the best eans of conquest. Notwithstanding the mild-ss of the weather, he was closely buttoned in rough great coat, which was well calculated give all due effect to the athletic propor-ns of the wearer.

There was a pause of some moments.

"This is but a wild, savage sort of scene for England, sir, in this day of new-fashioned ploughs and farming improvements," said the tall stranger, looking round at the ragged wastes, and grim woods, which lay steeped in the shade beside and before them.

"True," answered the youth; "and in a few years agricultural innovation will scarcely leave, even in these wastes, a single furze-blossom for the bee, or a tuft of green-sward for the grasshopper; but, however unpleasant the change my be for us foot travellers, we must not repine at what they tell us is so sure a witness of the prosperity of the country."

"*They* tell us! *who* tell us?" exclaimed the stranger, with great vivacity. "Is it the puny and spiritless artisan, or the debased and crippled slave of the counter and the till, or the sallow speculator on morals, who would mete us out our liberty—our happiness—our very feelings, by the yard, and inch, and fraction? No, no, let *them* follow what the books and precepts of their own wisdom teach them; let them cultivate more highly the lands they have already parcelled out by dykes and fences, and leave, though at scanty intervals, some green patches of unpolluted land for the poor man's beast, and the free man's foot."

"You are an enthusiast on this subject," said the younger traveller, not a little surprised at the tone and words of the last speech; "and if I were not just about to commence the world with a firm persuasion that enthusiasm on any matter is a great obstacle to success, I could be as warm, though not so eloquent, as yourself."

"Ah, sir," said the stranger, sinking into a more natural and careless tone, "I have a better right than I imagine you can claim to repine or even to inveigh against the boundaries which are day by day, and hour by hour, encroaching upon what I have learned to look upon as my own territory. You were, just before I joined you, singing an old song; I honor you for your taste: and no offence, sir, but a sort of fellowship in feeling made me take the liberty to accost you. I am no very great scholar in other things; but I owe my present circumstances of life solely to my fondness for those old songs and quaint madrigals. And I believe no person can better apply to himself Will Shakspeare's invitation:—

'Under the green wood tree
Who loves to lie with me,

And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.' "

Relieved from his former fear, but with increased curiosity at this quotation, which was half said, half sung, in a tone which seemed to evince a hearty relish for the sense of the words, the youth replied—

"Truly, I did not expect to meet among the travellers of this wild country with so well stored a memory. And, indeed, I should have imagined that the only persons to whom your verses could exactly have applied were those honorable vagrants from the Nile, whom in vulgar language we term gipsies."

"Precisely so, sir," answered the tall stranger, indifferently; "precisely so. It is to that ancient body that I belong."

"The devil you do?" quoth the youth, in unsophisticated surprise; "the progress of education is, indeed, astonishing!"

"Why," answered the stranger, laughing, "to tell you the truth, sir, I am a gipsy by inclination, not birth. The illustrious Bamfylde Moore Carew is not the only example of one of gentle blood and honorable education whom the fleshpots of Egypt have seduced."

"I congratulate myself," quoth the youth, in a tone that might have been in jest, "upon becoming acquainted with a character at once so respectable and so novel; and, to return your quotation in the way of a compliment, I cry out with the most fashionable author of Elizabeth's days—

'O for a bowl of fat Canary,
Rich Palermo—sparkling Sherry,'

in order to drink to our better acquaintance."

"Thank you sir,—thank you," cried the strange gipsy, seemingly delighted with the spirit with which his young acquaintance appeared to enter into his character and his quotation from a class of authors at that time much less known and appreciated than at present; "and if you have seen already enough of the world to take up with ale when neither Canary, Palermo, nor Sherry are forthcoming, I will promise, at least, to pledge you in large draughts of that homely beverage. What say you to passing a night with us? our tents are yet more at hand than the public-house of which I spoke to you."

The young man hesitated a moment, then replied—

"I will answer you frankly, my friend, even though I may find cause to repent my confidence. I have a few guineas about me, which though not a large sum, are *my all.* Now, however ancient and honorable your fraternity may be, they labor under a sad confusion, I fear, in their ideas of *meum* and *tuum.*"

"Faith, sir, I believe you are right; and were you some years older, I think you would not have favored me with the same disclosure you have done now; but you may be quite easy on that score. If you were made of gold, the rascals would not filch off the corner of your garment as long as you were under my protection. Does this assurance satisfy you?"

"Perfectly," said the youth: "and now how far are we from your encampment? I assure you I am all eagerness to be among a set of which I have witnessed such a specimen."

"Nay, nay," returned the gipsy, "you must not judge of all my brethern by me: I confess that they are but a rough tribe. However, I love them dearly: and am only the more inclined to think them honest to each other, because they are rogues to all the rest of the world."

By this time, our travellers had advanced nearly two miles since they had commenced companionship; and at a turn in the lane, about three hundred yards further on, they caught a glimpse of a distant fire, burning brightly through the dim trees. They quickened their pace, and striking a little out of their path into a common, soon approached two tents, the Arab homes of the vagrant and singular people with whom the gipsy claimed brotherhood and alliance.

CHAPTER II.

Here we securely live and ea
The cream of meat;
And keep eternal fires
By which we sit and *do divine.*
HERRICK—*Ode to Sir Clipseby Crew.*

AROUND a fire which blazed and crackled beneath the large seething pot, that seemed an

emblem of the mystery, and a promise of the good cheer, which are the supposed characteristics of the gipsy race, were grouped seven or eight persons, upon whose swarthy and strong countenances the irregular and fitful flame cast a picturesque and not unbecoming glow. All of these, with the exception of an old crone who was tending the pot, and a little boy who was feeding the fire with sundry fragments of stolen wood, started to their feet upon the entrance of the stranger.

"What ho, my bob cuffins," cried the gipsy guide, "I have brought you a gentry cove, to whom you will show all proper respect; and hark ye, my maunders, if ye dare beg, borrow, or steal a single croker—ay—but a baw-bee of him, I'll—but ye know me." The gipsy stopped abruptly, and turned an eye, in which menace vainly struggled with good humor, upon each of his brethren, as they submissively bowed to him and his *protégé*, and poured forth a profusion of promises, to which their admonitor did not even condescend to listen. He threw off his great coat, doubled it down by the best place near the fire, and made the youth forthwith possess himself of the seat it afforded. He then lifted the cover of the mysterious cauldron. "Well, Mort," cried he to the old woman, as he bent wistfully down, "what have we here?"

"Two ducks, three chickens, and a rabbit, with some potatoes," growled the old hag, who claimed the usual privilege of her culinary office, to be as ill tempered as she pleased.

"Good!" said the gipsy; "and now, Mim, my cull, go to the other tent, and ask its inhabitants, in my name, to come here and sup; bid them bring *their* cauldron to eke out ours —I'll find the lush."

With these words (which Mim, a short, swarthy member of the gang, with a countenance too astute to be pleasing, instantly started forth to obey) the gipsy stretched himself at full length by the youth's side, and began reminding him, with some jocularity, and at some length, of his promise to drink to their better acquaintance.

Something there was in the scene, the fire, the cauldron, the intent figure and withered countenance of the old woman, the grouping of the other forms, the rude but not unpicturesque tent, the dark still woods on either side, with the deep and cloudless skies above, as the stars broke forth one by one upon the silent air, which (to use the orthodox phrase of the novelist) would not have been wholly unworthy the bold pencil of Salvator himself.

The youth eyed, with that involuntary respect which personal advantages always command, the large, yet symmetrical proportions of his wild companion; nor was the face which belonged to that frame much less deserving of attention. Though not handsome, it was both shrewd and prepossessing in its expression; the forehead was prominent, the brows overhung the eyes, which were large, dark, and, unlike those of the tribe in general, rather calm than brilliant; the complexion, though sun-burnt, was not swarthy, and the face was carefully and cleanly shaved, so as to give all due advantage of contrast to the brown luxuriant locks which fell, rather in flakes than curls, on either side of the healthful and manly cheeks. In age, he was about thirty-five, and, though his air and mien were assuredly not lofty, nor aristocratic, yet they were strikingly above the bearing of his vagabond companions: those companions were in all respects of the ordinary race of gipsies; the cunning and flashing eye, the raven locks, the dazzling teeth, the bronzed color, and the low, slight, active form, were as strongly their distinguishing characteristics as the tokens of all their tribe.

But to these, the appearance of the youth presented a striking and beautiful contrast.

He had only just passed the stage of boyhood, perhaps he might have seen eighteen summers, probably not so many. He had, in imitation of his companion, and perhaps from mistaken courtesy to his new society, doffed his hat; and the attitude which he had chosen fully developed the noble and intellectual turn of his head and throat. His hair, as yet preserved from the disfiguring fashions of the day, was of a deep auburn, which was rapidly becoming of a more chesnut hue, and curled in short close curls from the nape of the neck to the commencement of a forehead singularly white and high. His brows finely and lightly penciled, and his long lashes of the darkest dye, gave a deeper and perhaps softer shade than they otherwise would have worn, to eyes quick and observant in their expression, and of a light hazel in their color. His cheek was very fair, and the red light of the fire cast an artificial tint of increased glow upon a com-

plexion that had naturally rather bloom than color; while a dark riding frock set off in their full beauty the fine outline of his chest, and the slender symmetry of his frame.

But it was neither his features, nor his form, eminently handsome as they were, which gave the principal charm to the young stranger's appearance—it was the strikingly bold, buoyant, frank, and almost joyous expression which presided over all. *There* seemed to dwell the first glow and life of youth, undimmed by a single fear, and unbaffled in a single hope. *There* were the elastic spring, the inexhaustible wealth of energies, which defied, in their exulting pride, the heaviness of sorrow, and the harrassments of time. It was a face that, while it filled you with some melancholy foreboding of the changes and chances which must, in the inevitable course of fate, cloud the openness of the unwrinkled brow, and soberize the fire of the daring and restless eye, instilled also within you some assurance of triumph, and some omen of success:—a vague but powerful sympathy with the adventurous and cheerful spirit, which appeared literally to speak in its expression. It was a face you might imagine in one born under a prosperous star, and you felt, as you gazed, a confidence in that bright countenance, which, like the shield of the British Prince,* seemed possessed with a spell to charm into impotence the evil spirits who menaced its possessor.

"Well, sir," said his friend, the gipsy, who had in his turn been surveying with admiration the sinewy and agile frame of his young guest, "well, sir, how fares your appetite? Old Dame Bingo will be mortally offended if you do not do ample justice to her good cheer."

"If so," answered our traveller, who, young as he was, had learnt already the grand secret of making, in every situation, a female friend, "if so, I shall be likely to offend her still more."

"And how, my pretty master?" said the old crone, with an iron smile.

"Why I shall be bold enough to reconcile matters with a kiss, Mrs. Bingo," answered the youth.

"Ha! ha!" shouted the tall gipsy; "it is many a long day since my old Mort slapped a gallant's face for such an affront. But here come our messmates. Good evening, my mumpers—make your bows to this gentleman, who has come to bowse with us to-night. 'Gad, we'll show him that old ale's none the worse for keeping company with the moon's darlings.—Come, sit down, sit down. Where's the cloth, ye ill-mannered loons, and the knives and platters? Have we no holiday customs for strangers, think ye?—Mim, my cove, off to *my* caravan—bring out the knives, and all other rattletraps; and harkye, my cuffin, this small key opens the inner hole, where you will find two barrels; bring one of them. I'll warrant it of the best, for the brewer himself drank some of the same sort but two hours before I *nimm'd* them. Come, stump, my cull, make yourself wings. Ho, Dame Bingo, is not that pot of thine seething yet?—Ah, my young gentleman, you commence betimes; so much the better; if love's a summer's day, we all know how early a summer morning begins," added the jovial Ægyptian, in a lower voice (feeling perhaps that he was only understood by himself), as he gazed complacently on the youth, who, with that happy facility of making himself everywhere at home, so uncommon to his countrymen, was already paying compliments, suited to their understanding, to two fair daughters of the tribe, who had entered with the new comers. Yet had he too much craft or delicacy, call it which you will, to continue his addresses to that limit where ridicule or jealousy, from the male part of the assemblage, might commence; on the contrary, he soon turned to the men, and addressed them with a familiarity so frank, and so suited to their taste, that he grew no less rapidly in their favor than he had already done in that of the women, and when the contents of the two cauldrons were at length set upon the coarse, but clean, cloth, which, in honor of his arrival, covered the sod, it was in the midst of a loud and universal peal of laughter, which some broad witticism of the young stranger had produced, that the party sat down to their repast.

Bright were the eyes and sleek the tresses of the damsel who placed herself by the side of the stranger, and many were the alluring glances and insinuated compliments which replied to his open admiration and profuse flattery; but still there was nothing exclusive in his attentions: perhaps an ignorance of the

* Prince Arthur.—See *The Fairy Queen.*

customs of his entertainers, and a consequent discreet fear of offending them, restrained him; or perhaps he found ample food for occupation in the plentiful dainties which his host heaped before him.

"Now tell me," said the gipsy chief (for chief he appeared to be), "if we lead not a merrier life than you dreamt of? or would you have us change our coarse fare and our simple tents, our vigorous limbs and free hearts, for the meagre board, the monotonous chamber, the diseased frame, and the toiling, careful, and withered spirit of some miserable mechanic?"

"Change!" cried the youth, with an earnestness which, if affected, was an exquisite counterfeit—"By Heaven, I would change with you myself."

"Bravo, my fine cove!" cried the host, and all the gang echoed their sympathy with his applause.

The youth continued: "Meat, and that plentiful; ale, and that strong; women, and those pretty ones; what can man desire more?"

"Ay," cried the host, "and all for nothing, —no, not even a tax; who else in this kingdom can say that? Come, Mim, push round the ale."

And the ale *was* pushed round, and if coarse the merriment, loud at least was the laugh that rung ever and anon from the old tent; and though, at moments, something in the guest's eye and lip might have seemed, to a very shrewd observer, a little wandering and absent, yet, upon the whole, he was almost as much at ease as the rest, and if he was not quite as talkative, he was to the full as noisy.

By degrees, as the hour grew later, and the barrel less heavy, the conversation changed into one universal clatter. Some told their feats in beggary; others, their achievements in theft; not a viand they had fed on but had its appropriate legend; even the old rabbit, which has been as tough as old rabbit can well be, had not been honestly taken from his burrow; no less a person than Mim himself had purloined it from a widow's footman, who was carrying it to an old maid from her nephew the Squire.

"Silence," cried the host, who loved talking as well as the rest, and who, for the last ten minutes, had been vainly endeavoring to obtain attention. "Silence! my maunders, it's late, and we shall have the queer cuffins * upon us if we keep it up much longer. What, ho, Mim, are you still gabbling at the foot of the table, when your betters are talking? As sure as my name's King Cole, I'll choke you with your own rabbit skin, if you don't hush your prating cheat—nay, never look so abashed—if you *will* make a noise, come forward, and sing us a gipsy song. You see, my young sir (turning to his guest), that we are not without our pretensions to the fine arts."

At this order, Mim started forth, and taking his station at the right hand of the *soi-disant* King Cole, began the following song, the chorus of which was chaunted in full diapason by the whole group, with the additional force of emphasis that knives, feet, and fists could bestow.

THE GIPSY'S SONG.

The king to his hall, and the steed to his stall,
And the cit to his bilking board;
But we are not bound to an acre of ground,
For our home is the houseless sward.
We sow not, nor toil; yet we glean from the soil
As much as its reapers do;
And wherever we rove, we feed on the cove
Who gibes at the mumping crew.

CHORUS—So the king to his hall, etc.

We care not a straw for the limbs of the law,
Nor a fig for the *cuffin queer;*
While Hodge and his neighbor shall lavish and labor,
Our tent is as sure of its cheer.

CHORUS—So the king to his hall, etc.

The worst have an awe of the *harman's* * claw,
And the best will avoid the *trap;* †
But our wealth is as free of the bailiff's *see,*
As our necks of the twisting crap. ‡

CHORUS—So the king to his hall, etc.

They say it is sweet to win the meat
For the which one has sorely wrought;
But I never could find that we lack'd the mind
For the food that has cost us nought!

CHORUS—So the king to his hall, etc.

And when we have ceased from our fearless feast,
Why, our *jigger* § will need no bars;
Our sentry shall be on the owlet's tree,
And our lamps the glorious stars.

CHORUS.

So the king to his hall, and the steed to his stall,
And the cit to his bilking board;
But we are not bound to an acre of ground,
For our home is the houseless sward.

Rude as was this lawless stave, the spirit with which it was sung atoned to the young

* Magistrates.

* Constable. † Bailiff. ‡ Gallows. § Door.

stranger for its obscurity and quaintness; as for his host, that curious personage took a lusty and prominent part in the chorus—nor did the old woods refuse their share of the burden, but sent back a merry echo to the chief's deep voice, and the harsher notes of his jovial brethren.

When the glee had ceased, King Cole rose, the whole band followed his example, the cloth was cleared in a trice, the barrel—oh! what a falling off was there!—was rolled into a corner of the tent, and the crew to whom the awning belonged began to settle themselves to rest; while those who owned the other encampment marched forth, with King Cole at their head. Leaning with no light weight upon his guest's arm, the lover of ancient minstrelsy poured into the youth's ear a strain of eulogy, rather eloquent than coherent, upon the scene they had just witnessed.

"What," cried his majesty, in an enthusiastic tone, "what can be so truly regal as our state? Can any man control us? Are we not above all laws? Are we not the most despotic of kings? Nay, more than the kings of earth—are we not the kings of Fairy-land itself? Do we not realize the golden dreams of the old rhymers—luxurious dogs that they were? Who would not cry out—

> Blest silent groves! O may ye be
> For ever Mirth's best nursery!
> May pure Contents
> For ever pitch *their tents*
> Upon these downs, these meads, these rocks, these mountains.

Uttering this notable extract from the thrice honored Sir Henry Wotton, King Cole turned abruptly from the common, entered the wood which skirted it, and, only attended by his guest, and his minister Mim, came suddenly, by an unexpected and picturesque opening in the trees, upon one of those itinerant vehicles termed caravans; he ascended the few steps which led to the entrance, opened the door, and was instantly in the arms of a pretty and young woman. On seeing our hero (for such we fear the youth is likely to become), she drew back with a blush not often found upon regal cheeks.

"Pooh," said King Cole, half tauntingly, half fondly, "pooh, Lucy, blushes are garden flowers, and ought never to be found wild in the woods:" then changing his tone, he said, "Come, put some fresh straw in the corner, this stranger honors our palace to-night.—Mim, unload thyself of our royal treasures—watch without, and vanish from within!"

Depositing on his majesty's floor the appurtenances of the regal supper-table, Mim made his respectful adieus, and disappeared; meanwhile the Queen scattered some fresh straw over a mattress in the narrow chamber, and, laying over all a sheet of singularly snowy hue, made her guest some apology for the badness of his lodging; this King Cole interrupted, by a most elaborately noisy yawn, and a declaration of extreme sleepiness. "Now, Lucy, let us leave the gentleman to what he will like better than soft words, even from a queen. Good night, sir, we shall be stirring at day-break;" and, with this farewell, King Cole took the lady's arm, and retired with her into an inner-compartment of the caravan.

Left to himself, our hero looked round with surprise at the exceeding neatness which reigned over the whole apartment. But what chiefly engrossed the attention of one to whose early habits books had always been treasures, were several volumes, ranged in comely shelves, fenced with wire-work, on either side of the fire-place. "Courage," thought he, as he stretched himself on his humble couch, "my adventures have commenced well; a gipsy tent, to be sure, is nothing very new, but a gipsy who quotes poetry, and enjoys a modest wife, speaks better than books do for the improvement of the world!"

CHAPTER III.

> "Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
> Than that of painted pomp?"—*As You Like It.*

The sun broke cheerfully through the small lattice of the caravan, as the youth opened his eyes, and saw the good-humored countenance of his gipsy host bending over him complacently.

"You slept so soundly, sir, that I did not like to disturb you; but my good wife only waits your rising to have all ready for breakfast."

"It were a thousand pities," cried the guest, leaping from his bed, "that so pretty a face

should look cross on my account, so I will not keep her waiting an instant."

The gipsy smiled, as he answered, "I require no professional help from the devil, sir, to foretell your fortune."

"No!—and what is it?"

"Honor, reputation, success, all that are ever won by a soft tongue, if it be backed by a bold heart."

Bright and keen was the flash which shot over the countenance of the one for whom this prediction was made, as he listened to it with a fondness for which his reason rebuked him. He turned aside with a sigh, which did not escape the gipsy, and bathed his face in the water which the provident hand of the good woman had set out for his lavations.

"Well," said his host, when the youth had finished his brief toilet, "suppose we breathe the fresh air, while Lucy smooths your bed, and prepares the breakfast."

"With all my heart," replied the youth, and they descended the steps which led into the wood. It was a beautiful, fresh morning, the air was like a draught from a Spirit's fountain, and filled the heart with new youth, and the blood with a rapturous delight; the leaves—the green, green leaves of spring—were quivering on the trees; among which, the happy birds fluttered and breathed the gladness of their souls in song. While the dewdrops that

strewed
A baptism o'er the flowers,

gave back, in their million mirrors, the reflected smiles of the cloudless and rejoicing sun.

"Nature," said the gipsy, "has bestowed on her children a gorgeous present in such a morning."

"True," said the youth; "and you, of us two, perhaps, only deserve it: as for me, when I think of the long road of dust, heat, and toil, that lies before me, I could almost wish to stop here and ask an admission into the gipsy's tents."

"You could not do a wiser thing!" said the gipsy, gravely.

"But fate leaves me no choice," continued the youth, as seriously as if he were in earnest; "and I must quit you immediately after I have a second time tasted of your hospitable fare."

"If it must be so," answered the gipsy, "I will see you at least a mile or two on your road." The youth thanked him for a promise which his curiosity made acceptable, and they turned once more to the caravan.

The meal, however obtained, met with as much honor as it could possibly have received from the farmer from whom its materials were borrowed.

It was not without complacency that the worthy pair beheld the notice their guest lavished upon a fair, curly-headed boy of about three years old, the sole child and idol of the gipsy potentates. But they did not perceive, when the youth rose to depart, that he slipped into the folds of the child's dress a ring of some value, the only one he possessed.

"And now," said he, after having thanked his entertainers for their hospitality, "I must say good-by to your flock, and set out upon my day's journey."

Lucy, despite her bashfulness, shook hands with her handsome guest, and the latter, accompanied by the gipsy chief, strolled down to the encampments.

Open and free was his parting farewell to the inmates of the two tents, and liberal was the hand which showered upon all—especially on the damsel who had been his Thais of the evening feast—the silver coins which made no inconsiderable portion of his present property.

It was amidst the oracular wishes and favorable predictions of the whole crew, that he recommenced his journey with the gipsy chief.

When the tents were fairly out of sight, and not till then, King Cole broke the silence which had as yet subsisted between them.

"I suppose, my young gentleman, that you expect to meet some of your friends or relations at W——? I know not what they will say when they hear where you have spent the night."

"Indeed!" said the youth; "whoever hears my adventures, relation or not, will be delighted with my description; but in sober earnest, I expect to find no one at W—— more my friend than a surly innkeeper, unless it be his dog."

"Why, they surely do not suffer a stripling of your youth and evident quality to wander alone!" cried King Cole, in undisguised surprise.

The young traveller made no prompt answer, but bent down as if to pluck a wild flower which grew by the road side: after a pause, he said—

"Nay, Master Cole, you must not set me the example of playing the inquisitor, or you cannot guess how troublesome I shall be. To tell you truth, I am dying with curiosity to know something more about you than you may be disposed to tell me: you have already confessed that, however boon companions your gipsies may be, it is not among gipsies that you were born and bred."

King Cole laughed: perhaps he was not ill pleased by the curiosity of his guest, nor by the opportunity it afforded him of being his own hero.

"My story, sir," said he, "would be soon told if you thought it worth the hearing, nor does it contain anything which should prevent my telling it."

"If so," quoth the youth, "I shall conceive your satisfying my request a still greater favor than those you have already betowed upon me."

The gipsy relaxed his pace into an indolent saunter, as he commenced:

"The first scene that I remember was similar to that which you witnessed last night. The savage tent, and the green moor — the fagot blaze—the eternal pot, with its hissing note of preparation—the old dame who tended it, and the ragged urchins who learnt from its contents the first reward of theft, and the earliest temptation to it—all these are blended into agreeable confusion as the primal impressions of my childhood. The woman who nurtured me as my mother was rather capricious than kind, and my infancy passed away, like that of more favored scions of fortune, in alternate chastisement and caresses. In good truth, Kinching Meg had the shrillest voice and the heaviest hand of the whole crew, and I cannot complain of injustice, since she treated me no worse than the rest. Notwithstanding the irregularity of my education, I grew up strong and healthy, and my reputed mother had taught me so much fear for herself that she left me none for anything else; accordingly I became bold, reckless, and adventurous, and at the age of thirteen was as thorough a reprobate as the tribe could desire.

"At that time a singular change befel me: we (that is, my mother and myself) were begging, not many miles hence, at the door of a rich man's house, in which the mistress lay on her death-bed. That mistress was my *real* mother, from whom Meg had stolen me in my first year of existence. Whether it was through the fear of conscience, or the hope of reward, no sooner had Meg learnt the dangerous state of my poor mother, the constant grief which they said had been the sole, though slow, cause of her disease, and the large sums which had been repeatedly offered for my recovery; no sooner, I say, did Meg ascertain all these particulars, than she fought her way up to the sick chamber, fell on her knees before the bed, owned her crime, and produced myself. Various little proofs of time, place, circumstance; the clothing I had worn when stolen, and which was still preserved, joined to the striking likeness I bore to both my parents, especially to my father, silenced all doubt and incredulity; I was welcomed home with a joy which it is in vain to describe. My return seemed to recall my mother from the grave; she lingered on for many months longer than her physicians thought it possible, and when she died, her last words commended me to my father's protection.

"My surviving parent needed no such request. He lavished upon me all that superfluity of fondness and food, of which those good people who are resolved to spoil their children, are so prodigal. He could not bear the idea of sending me to school; accordingly he took a tutor for me, a simple-hearted, gentle kind man, who possessed a vast store of learning rather curious than useful. He was a tolerable, and at least an enthusiastic antiquarian—a more than tolerable poetaster; and he had a prodigious budget full of old ballads and songs, which *he* loved better to teach and *I* to learn, than all the 'Latin, Greek, geography, astronomy, and the use of the globes,' which my poor father had so sedulously bargained for.

"Accordingly, I became exceedingly well-informed in all the 'precious conceits' and 'golden garlands' of our British ancients, and continued exceedingly ignorant of every thing else, save and except a few of the most fashionable novels of the day, and the contents of six lying volumes of voyages and travels, which flattered both my appetite for the wonderful,

and my love of the adventurous. My studies such as they were, were not by any means suited to curb or direct the vagrant tastes my childhood had acquired: on the contrary, the old poets, with their luxurious description of the 'green wood,' and the forest life; the fashionable novelists, with their spirited accounts of the wanderings of some fortunate rogue, and the ingenious travellers, with their wild fables, so dear to the imagination of every boy, only fomented within me a strong though secret regret at my change of life, and a restless disgust to the tame home and bounded roamings to which I was condemned. When I was about seventeen, my father sold his property (which he had become possessed of in right of my mother), and transferred the purchase money to the security of the funds. Shortly afterwards he died; the bulk of his fortune became mine; the remainder was settled upon a sister, many years older than myself, who, in consequence of her marriage and residence in a remote part of Wales, I had never yet seen.

"Now, then, I was perfectly free and unfettered; my guardian lived in Scotland, and left me entirely to the guidance of my tutor, who was both too simple and too indolent to resist my inclinations. I went to London, became acquainted with a set of most royal scamps, frequented the theatres, and the taverns, the various resorts which constitute the gaieties of a blood just above the middle class, and was one of the noisiest and wildest 'blades' that ever heard 'the chimes by midnight,' and the magistrate's lecture for matins. I was a sort of leader among the jolly dogs I consorted with. My earlier education gave a raciness and nature to my delineations of 'life,' which delighted them. But somehow or other I grew wearied of this sort of existence. About a year after I was of age, my fortune was more than three parts spent; I fell ill with drinking, and grew dull with remorse; need I add that my comrades left me to myself? A fit of the spleen, especially if accompanied with duns, makes one woefully misanthropic; so, when I recovered from my illness, I set out on a tour through Great Britain and France—alone, and principally on foot. Oh, the rapture of shaking off the half friends and cold formalities of society, and finding oneself all unfettered, with no companion but nature, no guide but youth, and no flatterer but hope!

"Well, my young friend, I travelled for two years, and saw, even in that short time, enough of this busy world to weary and disgust me with its ordinary customs. I was not made to be polite, still less to be ambitious. I sighed after the coarse comrades and the free tents of my first associates, and a thousand remembrances of the gipsy wanderings, steeped in all the green and exhilarating colors of childhood, perpetually haunted my mind. On my return from my wanderings, I found a letter from my sister, who, having become a widow, had left Wales, and had now fixed her residence in a well-visited watering-place in the west of England. I had never yet seen her, and her letter was a fine lady-like sort of epistle, with a great deal of romance and a very little sense, written in an extremely pretty hand, and ending with a quotation from Pope. (I never could endure Pope, nor indeed any of the poets of the days of Anne and her successors.) It was a beautiful season of the year; I had been inured to pedestrian excursions, so I set off on foot to see my nearest surviving relative. On the way, I fell in (though on a very different spot) with the very encampment you saw last night. By Heavens, that was a merry meeting to me; I joined, and journeyed with them for several days—never do I remember a happier time. Then, after many years of bondage and stiffness, and accordance with the world, I found myself at ease, like a released bird; with what zest did I join in the rude jokes and the knavish tricks, the stolen feasts and the roofless nights of those careless vagabonds.

"I left my fellow-travellers at the entrance of the town where my sister lived. Now came the contrast. Somewhat hot, rather coarsely clad, and covered with the dust of a long summer's day, I was ushered into a little drawing-room, eighteen feet by twelve, as I was afterwards somewhat pompously informed. A flaunting carpet, green, red, and yellow, covered the floor. A full-length picture of a thin woman, looking most agreeably ill-tempered, stared down at me from the chimney-piece; three stuffed birds—how emblematic of domestic life!—stood stiff and imprisoned, even after death, in a glass cage. A fire-screen, and a bright fire-place; chairs covered with holland, to preserve them from the atmosphere; and long mirrors, wrapped as to the frame-work, in yellow muslin, to keep off the flies, finish the

panorama of this watering-place mansion. The door opened—silks rustled—voice shrieked 'My Brother!' and a figure—a thin figure—the orignal of the picture over the chimney-piece—rushed in."

"I can well fancy her joy," said the youth.

"You can do no such thing, begging your pardon, sir," resumed King Cole. "She had no joy at all:—she was exceedingly surprised and disappointed. In spite of my early adventures, I had nothing picturesque or romantic about me at all. I was very thirsty, and I called for beer; I was very tired, and I lay down on the sofa; I wore thick shoes, and small buckles; and my clothes were made, God knows where, and were certainly put on God knows how. My sister was miserably ashamed of me; she had not even the manners to disguise it. In a higher rank of life than that which she held, she would have suffered far less mortification; for I fancy great people pay but little *real* attention to externals. Even if a man of rank is vulgar, it makes no difference in the orbit in which he moves; but your 'genteel gentlewomen' are so terribly dependent upon what Mrs. Tomkins will say—so very uneasy about their relations, and the opinion they are held in—and, above all, so made up of appearances and clothes—so undone if they do not eat, drink, and talk *á-la-mode*, that I can fancy no shame like that of my poor sister at having found, and *being found with*, a vulgar brother.

"I saw how unwelcome I was, and I did not punish myself by a long visit. I left her house, and returned towards London. On my road, I again met with my gipsy friends; the warmth of their welcome enchanted me—you may guess the rest. I stayed with them so long that I could not bear to leave them; I re-entered their crew: I am one among them. Not that I have become altogether and solely of the tribe: I still leave them whenever the whim seizes me, and repair to the great cities and thoroughfares of man. There I am soon driven back again to my favorite and fresh fields, as a reed upon a wild stream is dashed back upon the green rushes from which it has been torn. You perceive that I have many comforts and distinctions above the rest; for, alas, sir, there is no society, however free and democratic, where wealth will not create an aristocracy; the remnant of my fortune provides me with my unostentatious equipage, and the few luxuries it contains; it repays secretly to the poor what my fellow vagrants occasionally filch from them; it allows me to curb among the crew all the grosser and heavier offences against the law to which want might otherwise compel them; and it serves to keep up that sway and ascandancy which my superior education and fluent spirits enabled me at first to attain. Though not *legally* their king, I assume that little over the few encampments with which I am accustomed to travel, and you perceive that I have given my simple name both to the jocular and kingly dignity of which the old song will often remind you. My story is done."

"Not quite," said his companion: "your wife? How came you by that blessing?"

"Ah! thereby hangs a pretty and a love-sick tale, which would not sound ill in an ancient ballad; but I will content myself with briefly sketching it. Lucy is the daughter of a gentleman farmer: about four years ago I fell in love with her. I wooed her cladestinely, and at last I owned I was a gipsy; I did not add my birth nor fortune—no, I was full of the romance of the Nut-brown Maid's lover, and attempted a trial of woman's affection, which even in these days was not disappointed. Still her father would not consent to our marriage, till very luckily things went bad with him; corn, crops, cattle—the deuce was in them all; an execution was in his house, and a writ out against his person. I settled these matters for him, and in return received a father-in-law's blessing, and we are now the best friends in the world. Poor Lucy is perfectly reconciled to her caravan, and her wandering husband, and has never, I believe, once repented the day on which she became the gipsy's wife!"

"I thank you heartily for your history," said the youth, who had listened very attentively to this detail; "and though my happiness and pursuits are centred in that world which you despise, yet I confess that I feel a sensation very like envy at your singular choice; and I would not dare to ask of my heart whether that choice is not happier, as it is certainly more philosophical, than mine."

They had now reached a part of the road where the country assumed a totally different character; the woods and moors were no longer visible, but a broad and somewhat bleak extent

of country lay before them. Here and there only a few solitary trees broke the uniformity of the wide fields and scanty hedge-rows, and at distant intervals the thin spires of the scattered churches rose like the prayers, of which they were the symbols, to mingle themselves with heaven.

The gipsy paused: "I will accompany you," said he, "no farther: your way lies straight onwards, and you will reach W—— before noon; farewell, and may God watch over you!"

"Farewell!" said the youth, warmly pressing the hand which was extented to him. "If we ever meet again, it will probably solve a curious riddle, viz., whether *you* are not disgusted with the caravan, and *I* with the world!"

"The latter is more likely than the former," said the gipsy, "for one stands a much greater chance of being disgusted with others than with oneself; so changing a little the old lines, I will wish you adieu after my own fashion, viz., in verse—

> 'Go, set thy heart on winged wealth,
> Or unto honor's towers aspire;
> But give me freedom and my health,
> And there's the sum of my desire!'"

CHAPTER IV.

> The letter, Madam—have you none for me?
> —*The Rendezvous.*
>
> Provide surgeons.—*The Lover's Progress.*

Our solitary traveller pursued his way with the light step, and gay spirits, of youth and health.

"Turn gipsy, indeed!" he said, talking to himself; "there is something better in store for me than that. Ay, I have all the world before me where to choose—*not* my place of rest. No, many a long year will pass away ere any place of rest will be my choice! I wonder whether I shall find the letter at W——; *the* letter, the last letter I shall ever have from home: but it is no home to me now; and *I*—*I*, insulted, reviled, trampled upon, without even a name!—Well, well, I will earn a still fairer one than that of my forefathers. They shall be proud to own me yet." And with these words the speaker broke off abruptly, with a swelling chest and a flashing eye; and as, an unknown and friendless adventurer, he gazed on the expanded and silent country around him, he felt, like Castruccio Castrucani, that he could stretch his hands to the east and to the west, and exclaim, "Oh, that my power kept pace with my spirit, then should it grasp the corners of the earth."

The road wound at last from the champaign country, through which it had for some miles extended itself, into a narrow lane, girded on either side by a dead fence. As the youth entered this lane, he was somewhat startled by the abrupt appearance of a horseman, whose steed leaped the hedge so close to our hero as almost to endanger his safety. The rider, a gentleman of about five-and-twenty, pulled up, and in a tone of great courtesy, apologized for his inadvertency; the apology was readily admitted, and the horseman rode onwards in the direction of W——.

Trifling as this incident was, the air and mien of the stranger were sufficient to arrest, irresistibly, the thoughts of the young traveller; and before they had flowed into a fresh channel he found himself in the town, and at the door of the inn to which his expedition was bound. He entered the bar; a buxom landlady, and a still more buxom daughter, were presiding over the spirits of the place.

"You have some boxes and a letter for me, I believe," said the young gentleman to the comely hostess.

"To *you*, sir! the name if you please?"

"To—to—to C— L—," said the youth; "the initials C. L., to be left till called for."

"Yes, sir, we *have* some luggage—came last night by the van,—and a letter besides, sir, to C. L. also."

The daughter lifted her large dark eyes at the handsome stranger, and felt a wonderful curiosity to know what the letter to C. L. could possibly be about; meanwhile mine hostess, raising her hand to a shelf on which stood an Indian slop-basin, the great ornament of the bar at the Golden Fleece, brought from its cavity a well-folded and well-sealed epistle.

"That is it," cried the youth; "show me a private room instantly."

"What *can* he want a private room for?" thought the landlady's daugher.

"Show the gentleman to the Griffin, No. 4, John Merrylack," said the landlady herself.

With an impatient step the owner of the let-

ter followed a slipshod and marvellously unwashed waiter into No. 4—a small square asylum for town travellers, country yeomen, and "single gentlemen;" presenting, on the one side, an admirable engraving of the Marquis of Granby, and on the other an equally delightful view of the stable yard.

Mr. C. L. flung himself on a chair (there *were* only four chairs in No. 4), watched the waiter out of the room, seized his letter, broke open the seal, and read—yea, reader, *you* shall read it too—as follows:—

"Inclosed is the sum to which you are entitled; remember, that it is all which you can ever claim at my hands; remember, also, that *you* have made the choice which, now, nothing can persuade me to alter. Be the name you have so long iniquitously borne henceforth and always forgotten; upon that condition you may yet hope, from my generosity, the future assistance which you *must* want, but which you could not ask from my affection. Equally, by my heart and my reason, you are for ever DISOWNED."

The letter fell from the reader's hands. He took up the inclosure; it was an order payable in London for £1000; to him it seemed like the rental of the Indies.

"Be it so!" he said aloud, and slowly; "be it so! With this will I carve my way; many a name in history was built upon a worse foundation!"

With these words he carefully put up the money, re-read the brief note which enclosed it, tore the latter into pieces, and then, going towards the aforesaid view of the stable-yard, threw open the window and leant out, apparently in earnest admiration of two pigs, which marched, gruntingly, towards him, one goat regaling himself upon a cabbage, and a broken-winded, emaciated horse, which having just been, what the ostler called, "rubbed down," was just going to be, what the ostler called, "fed."

While engaged in this interesting survey, the clatter of hoofs was suddenly heard upon the rough pavement—a bell rang—a dog barked—the pigs grunted—the ostler ran out, and the stranger, whom our hero had before met on the road, trotted into the yard.

It was evident from the obsequiousness of the attendants, that the horseman was a personage of no mean importance; and indeed there was something singularly distinguished and high-bred in his air and carriage.

"Who *can* that be?" said the youth, as the horseman, having dismounted, turned towards the door of the inn: the question was readily answered—"There goes pride and poverty!" said the ostler—"Here comes Squire Mordaunt!" said the landlady.

At the further end of the stable-yard, through a narrow gate, the youth caught a glimpse of the green sward, and springing flowers, of a small garden. Wearied with the sameness of No. 4, rather than with his journey, he sauntered towards the said gate, and, seating himself in a small arbor within the garden, surrendered himself to reflection.

The result of this self-conference was a determination to leave the Golden Fleece by the earliest conveyance which went to that great object and emporium of all his plans and thoughts, London. As, full of this resolution, and buried in the dreams, which it conjured up, he was returning with downcast eyes and unheeding steps through the stable-yard, to the delights of No. 4, he was suddenly accosted by a loud and alarmed voice:

"For God's sake, sir, look out, or——"

The sentence was broken off, the intended warning came too late, our hero staggered back a few steps, and fell, stunned and motionless, against the stable door. Unconsciously he had passed just behind the heels of the stranger's horse, which, being by no means in good humor with the clumsy manœuvres of his *Shampooer*, the ostler, had taken advantage of the opportudity presented to him of working off his irritability, and had consequently inflicted a severe kick upon the right shoulder of Mr. C. L.

The stranger, honored by the landlady with the name and title of Squire Mordaunt, was in the yard at the moment. He hastened towards the sufferer, who, as yet, was scarcely sensible, and led him into the house. The surgeon of the village was sent for, and appeared. This disciple of Galen, commonly known by the name of Jeremiah Bossolton, was a gentleman considerably more inclined to breadth than length. He was exactly five feet one inch in height, but thick and solid as a milestone; a wig of modern cut, carefully curled and powdered, gave somewhat of a modish, and therefore unseemly, grace, to a solemn eye; a mouth drawn down at the corners; a nose that had something in it exceedingly consequential; eye-brows sage and shaggy; ears large and

fiery; and a chin that would have done honor to a mandarin. Now Mr. Jeremiah Bossolton had a certain peculiarity of speech to which I fear I shall find it difficult to do justice. Nature had impressed upon his mind a prodigious love of the grandiloquent; Mr. Bossolton, therefore, disdained the exact language of the vulgar, and built unto himself a lofty fabric of words in which his sense managed very frequently to lose itself. Moreover, upon beginning a sentence of peculiar dignity, Mr. Bossolton was, it must be confessed, sometimes at a loss to conclude it in a period worthy of the commencement; and this caprice of nature, which had endowed him with more words than thoughts (necessity is, indeed, the mother of invention), drove him into a very ingenious method of remedying the deficiency; this was simply the plan of repeating the sense by inverting the sentence.

"How long a period of time," said Mr. Bossolton, "has elapsed since this deeply-to-be-regretted and seriously-to-be-investigated accident occurred?"

"Not many minutes," said Mordaunt: "make no further delay, I beseech you, but examine the arm; it is not broken, I trust?"

"In this world, Mr. Mordaunt," said the practitioner, bowing very low, for the person he addressed was of the most ancient lineage in the county, "in this world, Mr. Mordaunt, even at the earliest period of civilization, delay in matters of judgment has ever been considered of such vital importance, and—and such important vitality, that we find it inculcated in the proverbs of the Greeks and the sayings of the Chaldeans, as a principle of the most expedient utility, and—and—the most useful expediency!"

"Mr. Bossolton," said Mordaunt, in a tone of remarkable and even artificial softness and civility, "have the kindness *immediately* to examine this gentleman's bruises."

Mr. Bossolton looked up to the calm but haughty face of the speaker, and, without a moment's hesitation, proceeded to handle the arm, which was already stripped for his survey.

"It frequently occurs," said Mr. Bossolton, "in the course of my profession, that the forcible, sudden, and vehement application of any hard substance, like the hoof of a quadruped, to the soft, tender, and carniferous parts of the human frame, such as the arm, occasions a pain, a pang, I should rather say, of the intensest acuteness, and—and of the acutest intensity."

"Pray, Mr. Bossolton, is the bone broken?" asked Mordaunt.

By this time the patient, who had been hitherto in that languor which extreme pain always produces at first, especially on young frames, was sufficiently recovered to mark and reply to the kind solicitude of the last speaker: "I thank you, sir," said he with a smile, "for your anxiety, but I feel that the bone is *not* broken, the muscles are a little hurt—that is all."

"Young gentleman," said Mr. Bossolton, "you must permit me to say that they who have all their lives been employed in the pursuit, and the investigation, and the analysis of certain studies, are, in general, better acquainted with those studies than they who have neither given them any importance of consideration;—nor—nor any consideration of importance. Establishing this as my hypothesis, I shal lnow proceed to—"

"Apply immediate remedies, if you please, Mr. Bossolton," interrupted Mr. Mordaunt, in that sweet and honied tone which somehow or other always silenced even the garrulous practitioner.

Driven into taciturnity, Mr. Bossolton again inspected the arm, and proceeded to urge the application of liniments and bandages, which he promised to prepare with the most solicitudinous dispatch, and the most dispatchful solicitude.

CHAPTER V.

> Your name, Sir!
> Ha! my name, you say—my name?
> 'Tis well—my name—is—nay, I must consider.
> —*Pedrillo.*

THIS accident occasioned a delay of some days in the plans of the young gentleman, for whom we trust, very soon, both for our own convenience, and that of our reader, to find a fitting appellation.

Mr. Mordaunt, after seeing every attention paid to him both surgical and hospitable, took his departure with a promise to call the next

day; leaving behind him a strong impression of curiosity and interest to serve our hero as some mental occupation until his return. The bonny landlady came up in a new cap, with blue ribbons, in the course of the evening, to pay a visit of inquiry to the handsome patient, who was removed from the Griffin, No 4, to the Dragon, No. 8—a room whose merits were exactly in proportion to its number,—viz., twice as great as those of No. 4.

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Taptape, with a courtesy, "I trust you find yourself better."

"At *this* moment I do," said the gallant youth, with a significant air.

"Hem!" quoth the landlady.

A pause ensued. In spite of the compliment, a certain suspicion suddenly darted across the mind of the hostess. Strong as are the prepossessions of the sex, those of the profession are much stronger.

"Honest folk," thought the landlady, "don't travel with their initials only; the last 'Whitehall Evening,' was full of shocking accounts of swindlers and cheats; and I gave nine pounds odd shillings for the silver tea-pot John has brought him up—as if the delf one was not good enough for a foot traveller?"

Pursuing these ideas, Mrs. Taptape, looking bashfully down, said,

"By-the-by, sir, Mr. Bossolton asked me what name he should put down in his book for the medicines; what would you please me to say, sir?"

"Mr. who?" said the youth, elevating his eye-brows.

"Mr. Bossolton, sir, the apothecary."

"Oh! Bossolton! very odd name that—not near so pretty as—dear me what a beautiful cap that is of yours!" said the young gentleman.

"Lord, sir, do you think so? the ribbon *is* pretty enough; but—but, as I was saying, what name shall I tell Mr. Bossolton to put in his book?" This, thought Mrs. Taptape, is coming to the point.

"Well!" said the youth slowly, and as if in a profound reverie, "well Bossolton is certainly the most singular name I ever heard; he does right to put it in a book—it is quite a curiosity! is he clever?"

"Very, sir," said the landlady, somewhat sharply; "but it is *your* name, not *his* that he wishes to put into his book."

"Mine!" said the youth—who appeared to have been seeking to gain time in order to answer a query which most men find requires very little deliberation—"Mine, you say; *my* name is Linden—Clarence Linden—you understand!"

"What a pretty name!" thought the landlady's daughter, who was listening at the keyhole; "but how *could* he admire that odious cap of *Ma's!*"

"And, now, landlady, I wish you would send up my boxes; and get me a newspaper, if you please."

"Yes, sir," said the landlady, and she rose to retire.

"I do not think," said the youth to himself, "that I could have hit on a prettier name—and so novel a one too!—Clarence Linden—why, if I were that pretty girl at the bar I could fall in love with the very words. Shakspeare was quite wrong when he said—

A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.

A rose by *any* name would not smell as sweet; if a rose's name was Jeremiah Bossolton, for instance, it would not, to my nerves, at least, smell of any thing but an apothecary's shop!"

When Mordaunt called the next morning, he found Clarence much better, and carelessly turning over various books, part of the contents of the luggage superscribed C. L. A book of whatever description was among the few companions for whom Mordaunt had neither fastidiousness nor reserve; and the sympathy of taste between him and the sufferer gave rise to a conversation less cold and common-place than it might otherwise have been. And when Mordaunt, after a stay of some length, rose to depart, he pressed Linden to return his visit before he left that part of the country; his place he added, was only about five miles distant from W——. Linden, greatly interested in his visitor, was not slow in accepting the invitation, and, perhaps, for the first time in his life, Mordaunt was shaking hands with a stranger he had only known two days.

CHAPTER VI.

While yet a child, and long before his time
He had perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness.
* * * * *
But eagerly he read, and read again.
* * * * *
Yet still uppermost
Nature was at his heart, as if he felt,
Though yet he knew not how, a wasting power
In all things that from her sweet influence
Might seek to wean him. Therefore with her hues,
Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
He clothed the nakedness of austere truth.

WORDSWORTH.

ALGERNON MORDAUNT was the last son of an old and honorable race, which had centuries back numbered princes in its line. His parents had had many children, but all (save Algernon, the youngest) died in their infancy. His mother perished in giving him birth. Constitutional infirmity, and the care of mercenary nurses, contributed to render Algernon a weakly and delicate child; hence came a taste for loneliness and a passion for study; and from these sprung, on the one hand, the fastidiousness and reserve, which render us apparently unamiable, and, on the other, the loftiness of spirit and the kindness of heart, which are the best and earliest gifts of literature, and more than counterbalance our deficiencies in the "minor morals" due to society by their tendency to increase our attention to the greater ones belonging to mankind. Mr. Mordaunt was a man of luxurious habits and gambling propensities: wedded to London, he left the house of his ancestors to moulder into desertion and decay; but to this home, Algernon was constantly consigned during his vacations from school; and its solitude and cheerlessness gave to a disposition naturally melancholy and thoughtful, those colors which subsequent events were calculated to deepen, not efface.

Truth obliges us to state, despite our partiality to Mordaunt, that, when he left his school, after a residence of six years, it was with the bitter distinction of having been the most unpopular boy in it. Why, nobody could exactly explain, for his severest enemies could not accuse him of ill-nature, cowardice, or avarice, and these make the three capital offences of a school-boy; but Algernon Mordaunt had already acquired the knowledge of himself, and could explain the cause, though with a bitter and swelling heart. His ill-health, his long residence at home, his unfriended and almost orphan situation, his early habits of solitude and reserve, all these, so calculated to make the spirit shrink within itself, made him, on his entrance at school, if not unsocial, *appear* so; this was the primary reason of his unpopularity; the second was that he perceived, for he was sensitive (and consequently acute) to the extreme, the misfortune of his manner, and in his wish to rectify it, it became doubly unprepossessing; to reserve, it now added embarrassment, to coldness, gloom; and the pain he felt in addressing or being addressed by another was naturally and necessarily reciprocal, for the effects of sympathy are nowhere so wonderful, yet so invisible, as in the manners.

By degrees he shunned the intercourse which had for him nothing but distress, and his volatile acquaintances were perhaps the first to set him the example. Often in his solitary walks he stopped afar off to gaze upon the sports, which none ever solicited him to share: and as the shout of laughter and of happy hearts came, peal after peal, upon his ear, he turned enviously, yet not malignantly, away, with tears, which not all his pride could curb, and muttered to himself "And these, these hate me!"

There are two feelings common to all high or affectionate natures, that of extreme susceptibility to opinion, and that of extreme bitterness at its injustice. These feelings were Mordaunt's; but the keen edge which one blow injures, the repetition blunts: and by little and little, Algernon became not only accustomed, but, as he persuaded himself, indifferent, to his want of popularity; his step grew more lofty, and his address more collected, and that which was once diffidence gradually hardened into pride.

His residence at the university was neither without honor nor profit. A college life was then, as now, either the most retired or the most social of all others; we need scarcely say which it was to Mordaunt, but his was the age when solitude is desirable, and when the closet forms the mind better than the world. Driven upon itself, his intellect became inquiring, and its resources profound; admitted to their inmost recesses, he revelled among the treasures of ancient lore, and in his dreams of the Nymph and Naiad, or his researches after truth in the deep wells of the Stagyrite or the golden fountains of Plato, he forgot the loneli-

ness of his lot, and exhausted the hoarded enthusiasm of his soul.

But his mind, rather thoughtful than imaginative, found no idol like "Divine Philosophy." It delighted to plunge itself into the mazes of metaphysical investigation—to trace the springs of the intellect—to connect the arcana of the universe—to descend into the darkest caverns, or to wind through the minutest mysteries of nature, and rise, step by step, to that arduous elevation on which Thought stands dizzy and confused, looking beneath upon a clouded earth, and above, upon an unfathomable heaven.

Rarely wandering from his chamber, known personally to few, and intimately by none, Algernon yet left behind him at the university the most remarkable reputation of his day. He had obtained some of the highest of academical honors, and by that proverbial process of vulgar minds which ever frames the magnificent from the unknown,—the seclusion in which he lived, and the recondite nature of his favorite pursuits, attached to his name a still greater celebrity and interest than all the orthodox and regular dignities he had acquired. There are few men who do not console themselves for not being generally loved, if they can reasonably hope that they are generally esteemed. Mordaunt had now grown reconciled to himself and to his kind. He had opened to his interest a world in his own breast, and it consoled him for his mortification in the world without. But, better than this, his habits as well as studies had strengthened the principles and confirmed the nobility of his mind. He was not, it is true, more kind, more benevolent, more upright than before; but those virtues now emanated from principle—not emotion: and principle to the mind is what a free constitution is to a people: without that principle, or that free constitution, the one may be for the moment as good—the other as happy, but we cannot tell how long the goodness and the happiness will continue.

On leaving the university, his father sent for him to London. He stayed there a short time, and mingled partially in its festivities; but the pleasures of English dissipation have for a century been the same, heartless without gaiety, and dull without refinement. Nor could Mordaunt, the most fastidious, yet warm-hearted of human beings, reconcile either his tastes or his affections to the cold insipidities of patrician society. His father's habits and evident distresses, deepened his disgust to his situation; for the habits were incurable, and the distresses increasing; and nothing but a circumstance, which Mordaunt did not then understand, prevented the final sale of an estate, already little better than a pompous incumbrance.

It was therefore with the half painful, half pleasurable sensation, with which we avoid contemplating a ruin we cannot prevent, that Mordaunt set out upon that continental tour, deemed then so necessary a part of education. His father, on taking leave of him, seemed deeply affected. "Go, my son," said he, "may God bless you, and not punish me too severely. I have wronged you deeply, and I cannot bear to look upon your face."

To these words Algernon attached a general, but they cloaked a peculiar, meaning: in three years, he returned to England—his father had been dead some months, and the signification of his parting address was already deciphered—but of this hereafter.

In his travels, Mordaunt encountered an Englishman, whose name I will not yet mention; a person of great reputed wealth—a merchant—yet a man of pleasure—a voluptuary in life, yet a saint in reputation—or, to abstain from the antithetical analysis of a character, which will not be corporeally presented to the reader, till our tale is considerably advanced—one who drew from nature a singular combination of shrewd, but false conclusions, and a peculiar philosophy, destined hereafter to contrast the colors, and prove the practical utility, of that which was espoused by Mordaunt.

There can be no education in which the lessons of the world do not form a share. Experience, in expanding Algernon's powers, had ripened his virtues. Nor had the years which had converted knowledge into wisdom failed in imparting polish to refinement. His person had acquired a greater grace, and his manners an easier dignity than before. His noble and generous mind had worked its impress upon his features, and his mien; and those who could overcome the first coldness and shrinking hauteur of his address, found it required no minute examination to discover the real expression of the eloquent eye, and the kindling lip.

He had not been long returned, before he found two enemies to his tranquillity—the one was love, the other appeared in the more formidable guise of a claimant to his estate. Before Algernon was aware of the nature of the latter, he went to consult with his lawyer.

"If the claim be just, I shall not, of course, proceed to law," said Mordaunt.

"But without the estate, sir, you have nothing!"

"True," said Algernon, calmly.

But the claim was not just, and to law he went.

In this law-suit, however, he had one assistant in an old relation, who had seen, indeed, but very little of him, but who compassionated his circumstances, and, above all, hated his opponent. This relation was rich and childless; and there were not wanting those who predicted that his money would ultimately discharge the mortgages, and repair the house, of the young representative of the Mordaunt honors. But the old kinsman was obstinate—self-willed—and under the absolute dominion of patrician pride; and it was by no means improbable that the independence of Mordaunt's character would soon create a disunion between them, by clashing against the peculiarities of his relation's temper.

It was a clear and sunny morning when Linden, tolerably recovered of his hurt, set out upon a sober and aged pony, which, after some natural pangs of shame, he had hired of his landlord, to Mordaunt Court.

Mordaunt's house was situated in the midst of a wild and extensive park, surrounded with woods, and interspersed with trees of the stateliest growth, now scattered into irregular groups, now marshalled into sweeping avenues; while, ever and anon, Linden caught glimpses of a rapid and brawling rivulet, which, in many a slight but sounding waterfall, gave a music strange and spirit-like to the thick copses and forest glades through which it went exulting on its way. The deer lay half concealed by the fern among which they couched, turning their stately crests towards the stranger, but not stirring from their rest; while from the summit of beeches, which would have shamed the pavilion of Tityrus, the rooks—those monks of the feathered people—were loud in their confused, but not displeasing, confabulations.

As Linden approached the house, he was struck with the melancholy air of desolation which spread over and around it: fragments of stone, above which clomb the rank weed, insolently proclaiming the triumph of nature's meanest offspring over the wrecks of art; a moat dried up, a railing once of massy gilding, intended to fence a lofty terrace on the right from the incursions of the deer, but which, shattered and decayed, now seemed to ask, with the satirist,—

> To what end did our lavish ancestors
> Erect of old these stately piles of ours?

—a chapel on the left, perfectly in ruins,—all appeared strikingly to denote that time had outstript fortune, and that the years, which alike hallow and destroy, had broken the consequence, in deepening the antiquity, of the House of Mordaunt.

The building itself agreed but too well with the tokens of decay around it; most of the windows were shut up, and the shutters of dark oak, richly gilt, contrasted forcibly with the shattered panes and mouldered framing of the glass. It was a house of irregular architecture. Originally built in the fifteenth century, it had received its last improvement, with the most lavish expense, during the reign of Anne; and it united the Gallic magnificence of the latter period with the strength and grandeur of the former; it was in a great part overgrown with ivy, and, where that insidious ornament had not reached, the signs of decay, and even ruin, were fully visible. The sun itself, bright and cheering as it shone over nature, making the green sod glow like emeralds, and the rivulet flash in its beam, like one of those streams of real light, imagined by Swedenborg in his visions of heaven, and clothing tree and fell, brake and hillock, with the lavish hues of infant summer;—the sun itself only made more desolate, because more conspicuous, the venerable fabric, which the youthful traveller frequently paused more accurately to survey, and its laughing and sportive beams playing over chink and crevice, seemed almost as insolent and untimeous as the mirth of the young, mocking the silent grief of some gray-headed and solitary mourner.

Clarence had now reached the porch, and the sound of the shrill bell he touched rung with a strange note through the general stillness of the place. A single servant appeared,

and ushered Clarence through a screen hall, hung round with relics of armor, and ornamented on the side opposite the music gallery with a solitary picture of gigantic size, exhibiting the full length of the gaunt person and sable steed of that Sir Piers de Mordaunt who had so signalized himself in the field in which Henry of Richmond changed his coronet for a crown. Through this hall Clarence was led to a small chamber clothed with uncouth and tattered arras, in which, seemingly immersed in papers, he found the owner of the domain.

"Your studies," said Linden, after the salutations of the day, "seem to harmonize with the venerable antiquity of your home;" and he pointed to the crabbed characters and faded ink of the papers on the table.

"So they ought," answered Mordaunt, with a faint smile; "for they are called from their quiet archives in order to support my struggle for that home. But I fear the struggle is in vain, and that the quibbles of law will transfer into other hands a possession I am foolish enough to value the more from my inability to maintain it."

Something of this Clarence had before learnt from the communicative gossip of his landlady; and, less desirous to satisfy his curiosity than to lead the conversation from a topic which he felt must be so unwelcome to Mordaunt, he expressed a wish to see the state apartments of the house. With something of shame at the neglect they had necessarily experienced, and something of pride at the splendor which no neglect could efface, Mordaunt yielded to the request, and led the way up a staircase of black oak, the walls and ceiling of which were covered with frescos of Italian art, to a suite of apartments in which time and dust seemed the only tenants. Lingeringly did Clarence gaze upon the rich velvet, the costly mirrors, the motley paintings of a hundred ancestors, and the antique cabinets, containing, among the most hoarded relics of the Mordaunt race, curiosities which the hereditary enthusiasm of a line of cavaliers had treasured as the most sacred of heirl-ooms, and which, even to the philosophical mind of Mordaunt, possessed a value he did not seek too minutely to analyze.

Here was the goblet from which the first prince of Tudor had drunk after the field of Bosworth. Here the ring with which the chivalrous Francis the First had rewarded a signal feat of that famous Robert de Mordaunt, who, as a poor but adventurous cadet of the house, had brought to the "first gentleman of France" the assistance of his sword. Here was the glove which Sir Walter had received from the royal hand of Elizabeth, and worn in the lists upon a crest which the lance of no antagonist in that knightly court could abase. And here, more sacred than all, because connected with the memory of misfortune, was a small box of silver which the last king of a fated line had placed in the hands of the gray-headed descendant of that Sir Walter after the battle of the Boyne, saying, "Keep this, Sir Everard Mordaunt, for the sake of one who has purchased the luxury of gratitude at the price of a throne!"

As Clarence glanced from these relics to the figure of Mordaunt, who stood at a little distance leaning against the window, with arms folded on his breast, and with eyes abstractedly wandering over the noble woods and extended park, which spread below, he could not but feel that if birth had indeed the power of setting its seal upon the form, it was never more conspicuous than in the broad front and lofty air of the last descendant of the race by whose memorials he was surrounded. Touched by the fallen fortunes of Mordaunt, and interested by the uncertainty which the chances of law threw over his future fate, Clarance could not resist exclaiming, with some warmth and abruptness—

"And by what subterfuge, or cavil, does the present claimant of these estates hope to dislodge their rightful possessor?"

"Why," answered Mordaunt, "it is a long story in detail, but briefly told in epitome. My father was a man whose habits greatly exceeded his fortune, and a few months after his death, Mr. Vavasour, a distant relation, produced a paper, by which it appeared that my father had, for a certain sum of ready money, disposed of his estates to this Mr. Vavasour, upon condition that they should not be claimed, nor the treaty divulged, till after his death; the reason for this proviso seems to have been the shame my father felt for his exchange, and his fear of the censures of that world to which he was always devoted."

"But how unjust to you!" said Clarence.

"Not so much so as it seems," said Mordaunt, deprecatingly; "for I was then but a

sickly boy, and according to the physicians, and I sincerely believe according also to my poor father's belief, almost certain of a premature death. In that case Vavasour would have been the nearest heir; and this expectancy, by the by, joined to the mortgages on the property, made the sum given ridiculously disproportioned to the value of the estate. I must confess that the news came upon me like a thunderbolt. I should have yielded up possession immediately, but was informed by my lawyers that my father had no legal right to dispose of the property; the discussion of that right forms the ground of the present law-suit. But," continued Mordaunt, proudly, yet mournfully, "I am prepared for the worst; if, indeed, I should call that the worst which can affect neither intellect, nor health, nor character, nor conscience."

Clarence was silent, and Mordaunt, after a brief pause, once more resumed his guidance. Their tour ended in a large library filled with books, and this, Mordaunt informed his guest, was his chosen sitting-room.

An old carved table was covered with works which for the most part possessed for the young mind of Clarence, more accustomed to imagine than reflect, but a very feeble attraction; on looking over them, he, however, found, half hid by a huge folio of Hobbes, and another of Locke, a volume of Milton's poems: this paved the way to a conversation, in which both had an equal interest, for both were enthusiastic in the character and genius of that wonderful man, for whom "the divine and solemn countenance of Freedom" was dearer than the light of day, and whose solitary spell, accomplishing what the whole family of earth once vainly began upon the plain of Shinar, has built of materials more imperishable than "slime and brick," "a city and a tower whose summit *has* reached to heaven."

It was with mutual satisfaction that Mordaunt and his guest continued their commune, till the hour of dinner was announced to them by a bell, which, formerly intended as an alarum, now served the peaceful purpose of a more agreeable summons.

The same servant who had admitted Clarence ushered them through the great hall into the dining-room, and was their solitary attendant during their repast.

The temper of Mordaunt was essentially grave and earnest, and his conversation almost invariably took the tone of his mind; this made their conference turn upon less minute and common-place topics than one between such new acquaintances, especially of different ages, usually does.

"You will positively go to London to-morrow, then?" said Mordaunt, as the servant, removing the appurtenances of dinner, left them alone.

"Positively," answered Clarence. "I go there to carve my own fortunes, and, to say truth, I am impatient to begin."

Mordaunt looked earnestly at the frank face of the speaker, and wondered that one so young, so well educated, and, from his air and manner, evidently of gentle blood, should appear so utterly thrown upon his own resources.

"I wish you success," said he, after a pause; "and it is a noble part of the organization of this world, that by increasing those riches which are beyond fortune, we do in general take the surest method of obtaining those which are in its reach."

Clarence looked inquiringly at Mordaunt, who perceiving it, continued, "I see that I should explain myself farther. I will do so by using the thoughts of a mind not the least beautiful and accomplished which this country has produced. 'Of all which belongs to us,' said Bolingbroke, 'the least valuable parts can alone fall under the will of others. *Whatever is best is safest;* lies out of the reach of human power; can neither be given nor taken away. Such is this great and beautiful work of nature, the world. Such is the mind of man, which contemplates and admires the world whereof it makes the noblest part. These are inseparably ours, and as long as we remain in one we shall enjoy the other.'"

"Beautiful, indeed!" exclaimed Clarence, with the enthusiasm of a young and pure heart, to which every loftier sentiment is always beautiful.

"And true as beautiful!" said Mordaunt "Nor is this all, for the mind can even dispense with that world, 'of which it forms a part,' if we can create within it a world still more inaccessible to chance. But (and I now return to and explain my former observation) the means by which we can effect this *peculiar* world, can be rendered equally subservient to our advancement and prosperity in that which

we share in common with our race; for the riches, which by the aid of wisdom we heap up in the storehouses of the mind, are, though not the only, the most customary coin by which external prosperity is bought. So that the philosophy, which can alone give independence to ourselves, becomes, under the name of honesty, the best policy in commerce with our kind."

In conversation of this nature, which the sincerity and lofty enthusiasm of Mordaunt rendered interesting to Clarence, despite the distaste to the serious so ordinary to youth, the hours passed on, till the increasing evening warned Linden to depart.

"Adieu!" said he to Mordaunt, "I know not when we shall meet again, but if we ever do, I will make it my boast, whether in prosperity or misfortune, not to have forgotten the pleasure I have this day enjoyed!"

Returning his guest's farewell with a warmth unusual to his manner, Mordaunt followed him to the door, and saw him depart.

Fate ordained that they should pursue, in very different paths, their several destinies; nor did it afford them an opportunity of meeting again, till years and events had severely tried the virtue of one, and materially altered the prospects of the other.

The next morning Clarence Linden was on his road to London.

CHAPTER VII.

"Upon my word," cries Jones, "thou art a very odd fellow, and I like thy humor extremely."—FIELDING.

THE rumbling and jolting vehicle, which conveyed Clarence to the metropolis, stopped at the door of a tavern in Holborn. Linden was ushered into a close coffee-room, and presented with a bill of fare. While he was deliberating between the respective merits of mutton chops and beef steaks, a man with a brown coat, brown breeches, and a brown wig, walked into the room: he cast a curious glance at Clarence, and then turned to the waiter.

"A pair of slippers!"

"Yes, sir," and the waiter disappeared.

"I suppose," said the brown gentleman to Clarence, "I suppose, sir, you are the gentleman just come to town?"

"You are right, sir," said Clarence.

"Very well, very well, indeed," resumed the stranger, musingly. "I took the liberty of looking at your boxes in the passage; I knew a lady, sir, a relation of yours, I think."

"Sir!" exclaimed Linden, coloring violently.

"At least I suppose, for her name was just the same as yours, only, at least, one letter difference between them: yours is *Linden*, I see, sir; hers was *Minden*. Am I right in my conjecture, that you are related to her?"

"Sir," answered Clarence, gravely; "notwithstanding the similarity of our names, we are not related."

"Very extraordinary," replied the stranger.

"Very," repeated Linden.

"I had the honor, sir," said the brown gentleman, "to make Mrs. Minden many presents of value, and I should have been very happy to have obliged you in the same manner, had you been any way connected with that worthy gentlewoman."

"You are very kind," said Linden, "you are very kind; and since such were your intentions, I believe I *must* have been connected with Mrs. Minden. At all events, as you justly observe, there is only the difference of a letter between our names;—a discrepancy too slight, I am sure, to alter your benevolent intentions."

Here the waiter returned with the slippers.

The stranger slowly unbuttoned his gaiters. "Sir," said he to Linden, "we will renew our conversation presently."

No sooner had the generous friend of Mrs. Minden deposited his feet into their easy tenements, than he quitted the room.

"Pray," said Linden to the waiter, when he had ordered his simple repast, "who is that gentleman in brown?"

"*Mr.* Brown," replied the waiter.

"And who, or what is Mr. Brown?" asked our hero.

Before the waiter could reply, Mr. Brown returned with a large bandbox, carefully enveloped in a blue handkerchief. "You come from ——, sir?" said Mr. Brown, quietly seating himself at the same table as Linden.

"No, sir, I do not."

"From ——, then?"

"No, sir!—from W——."

"W——?—ay—well, I knew a lady with a name very like W—— (the late Lady Waddilove) extremely well. I made her some valu-

able presents—her ladyship was very sensible of it."

"I don't doubt it, sir," replied Clarence; "such instances of general beneficence rarely occur!"

"I have some magnificent relics of her ladyship in this box," returned Mr. Brown.

"Really! then she was no less generous than yourself, I presume?"

"Yes, her ladyship *was* remarkably generous. About a week before she died (the late Lady Waddilove was quite sensible of her danger), she called me to her—'Brown,' said she, 'you are a good creature; I have had my most valuable things from you. I am not ungrateful; I will leave you—*my maid!* She is as clever as you are, and as good.' I took the hint, sir, and married. It was an excellent bargain. My wife is a charming woman; she entirely fitted up Mrs. Minden's wardrobe, and I furnished the house. Mrs. Minden was greatly indebted to us."

"Heaven help me!" thought Clarence, "the man is certainly mad."

The waiter entered with the dinner; and Mr. Brown, who seemed to have a delicate aversion to any conversation in the presence of the Ganymede of the Holborn tavern, immediately ceased his communications; meanwhile, Clarence took the opportunity to survey him more minutely than he had hitherto done.

His new acquaintance was in age about forty-eight; in stature, rather under the middle height; and thin, dried, withered, yet muscular withal, like a man who, in stinting his stomach for the sake of economy, does not the less enjoy the power of undergoing any fatigue or exertion that an object of adequate importance may demand. We have said already that he was attired, like twilight, "in a suit of sober brown;" and there was a formality, a precision, and a cat-like sort of cleanliness in his garb, which savored strongly of the respectable coxcombry of the counting-house. His face was lean, it is true, but not emaciated; and his complexion, sallow and adust, harmonized well with the colors of his clothing. An eye of the darkest hazel, sharp, shrewd, and flashing at times, especially at the mention of the euphonious name of Lady Waddilove—a name frequently upon the lips of the inheritor of her Abigail—with a fire that might be called brilliant, was of that modest species which can seldom encounter the straightforward glance of another; on the contrary, it seemed restlessly uneasy in any settled place, and wandered from ceiling to floor, and corner to corner, with an inquisitive, though apparently careless glance, as if seeking for something to admire or haply to appropriate; it also seemed to be the especial care of Mr. Brown to veil, as far as he was able, the vivacity of his looks beneath an expression of open and unheeding good nature, an expression strangely enough contrasting with the closeness and sagacity which nature had indelibly stamped upon features pointed, aquiline, and impressed with a strong mixture of the Judaical physiognomy. The manner and bearing of this gentleman partook of the same undecided character as his countenance; they seemed to be struggling between civility and importance; a real eagerness to make the acquaintance of the person he addressed, and an assumed recklessness of the advantages which that acquaintance could bestow;—it was like the behavior of a man who is desirous of having the best possible motives imputed to him, but is fearful lest that desire should not be utterly fulfilled. At the first glance you would have pledged yourself for his respectability; at the second, you would have half suspected him to be a rogue; and, after you had been half an hour in his company, you would confess yourself in the obscurest doubt which was the better guess, the first or the last.

"Waiter!" said Mr. Brown, looking enviously at the viands upon which Linden, having satisfied his curiosity, was now, with all the appetite of youth, regaling himself. "Waiter!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Bring me a sandwich—and—and, waiter, see that I have plenty of—plenty of——"

"What, sir?"

"Plenty of mustard, waiter."

"Mustard" (and here Mr. Brown addressed himself to Clarence) "is a very wonderful assistance to the digestion. By-the-by, sir, if you want any curiously fine mustard, I can procure you some pots quite capital—a great favor, though—they were smuggled from France, especially for the use of the late Lady Waddilove."

"Thank you," said Linden drily; "I shall be very happy to accept any thing you may wish to offer me."

Mr. Brown took a pocket-book from his

pouch. "Six pots of mustard, sir—shall I say six?"

"As many as you please," replied Clarence; and Mr. Brown wrote down "Six pots of French mustard."

"You are a very young gentleman, sir," said Mr. Brown, "probably intended for some profession—I don't mean to be impertinent, but if I can be of any assistance—"

"You can, sir," replied Linden, "and immediately—have the kindness to ring the bell."

Mr. Brown, with a grave smile, did as he was desired; the waiter re-entered, and receiving a whispered order from Clarence, again disappeared.

"What profession did you say, sir?" renewed Mr. Brown, artfully.

"None!" replied Linden.

"Oh, very well—very well indeed. Then as an idle, independent gentleman, you will of course be a bit of a beau—want some shirts, possibly—fine cravats, too—gentlemen wear a particular pattern now—gloves, gold, or shall I say *gilt* chain, watch and seals, a ring or two, and a snuff-box!"

"Sir, you are vastly obliging," said Clarence, in undisguised surprise.

"Not at all, I would do any thing for a relation of Mrs. Minden." The waiter re-entered; "Sir," said he to Linden, "your room is quite ready."

"I am glad to hear it," said Clarence, rising. "Mr. Brown, I have the honor of wishing you a good evening."

"Stay, sir—stay; you have not looked into these things belonging to the late Lady Waddilove."

"Another time," said Clarence, hastily.

"To-morrow, at ten o'clock," muttered Mr. Brown.

"I am exceedingly glad I have got rid of that fellow," said Linden to himself, as he stretched his limbs in his easy chair, and drank off the last glass of his pint of port. "If I have not already seen, I have already guessed, enough of the world, to know that you are to look to your pockets when a man offers you a present; they who 'give,' also 'take away.' So here I am in London, with an order for £1000 in my purse, the wisdom of Dr. Latinas in my head, and the health of eighteen in my veins; will it not be my own fault if I do not both *enjoy* and *make* myself——"

And then, yielding to meditations of future success, partaking strongly of the inexperienced and sanguine temperament of the soliloquist, Clarence passed the hours, till his pillow summoned him to dreams no less ardent, and perhaps no less unreal.

CHAPTER VIII.

O! how I long to be employed.—*Every Man in his Humor.*

CLARENCE was sitting the next morning over the very unsatisfactory breakfast which tea made out of broomsticks, and cream out of chalk, (adulteration thrived even in 17—) afforded, when the waiter thew open the door, and announced Mr. Brown.

"Just in time, sir, you perceive," said Mr. Brown; "I am punctuality itself: exactly a quarter of a minute to ten. I have brought you the pots of French mustard, and I have some very valuable articles which you *must* want, besides."

"Thank you, sir," said Linden, not well knowing what to say; and Mr. Brown, untying a silk handkerchief, produced three shirts, two pots of pomatum, a tobacco canister, with a German pipe, four pair of silk stockings, two gold seals, three rings, and a stuffed parrot!

"Beautiful articles these, sir," said Mr. Brown, with a snuffle 'of inward sweetness long drawn out,' and expressive of great admiration of his offered treasures; "beautiful articles, sir, ar'n't they?"

"Very, the parrot in particular," said Clarence.

"Yes, sir," returned Mr. Brown, "the parrot is indeed quite a jewel; it belonged to the late Lady Waddilove; I offer it to you with considerable regret, for——"

"Oh!" interrupted Clarence, "pray do not rob yourself of such a jewel, it really is of no use to me."

"I know that, sir—I know that," replied Mr. Brown; "but it will be of use to your friends; it will be inestimable to any old aunt, sir, any maiden lady living at Hackney, any curious elderly gentleman fond of a nick-nack. I knew you would know some one to send it to as a present, even though you should not want it yourself."

"Bless me!" thought Linden, "was there ever such generosity? Not content with providing for my wants, he extends his liberality even to any possible relations I may possess!"

Mr. Brown now re-tied 'the beautiful articles' in his handkerchief. "Shall I leave them, sir?" said he.

"Why, really," said Clarence, "I thought yesterday that you were in jest; but you must be aware that I cannot accept presents from any gentleman so much—so much a stranger to me as you are."

"No, sir, I *am* aware of that," replied Mr. Brown; "and in order to remove the unpleasantness of such a feeling, sir, on your part—merely in order to do that, I assure you with no other view, sir, in the world—I have just noted down the articles on this piece of paper; but, as you will perceive, at a price so low, as still to make them actually presents in every thing but the name. Oh, sir, I perfectly understand your delicacy, and would not, for the world, violate it."

So saying, Mr. Brown put a paper into Linden's hands, the substance of which a very little more experience of the world would have enabled Clarence to foresee: it ran thus:—

CLARENCE LINDEN, ESQ., Dr.
TO MR. MORRIS BROWN.

To Six Pots of French Mustard . . .	£ 1 4 0
To Three Superfine Holland Shirts, with Cambric Bosoms, complete	4 1 0
To Two Pots of Superior French Pomatum .	0 10 0
To a Tobacco Canister of enamelled Tin, with a finely executed head of the Pretender: slight flaw in the same	0 12 6
To a German Pipe, second hand, as good as new, belonging to the late Lady Waddilove	1 18 0
To Four Pair of Black Silk Hose, ditto, belonging to her Ladyship's husband . .	2 8 0
To Two Superfine Embossed Gold Watch Seals, with a Classical Motto and Device to each, *viz.*, Mouse Trap and "Prenez Garde," to one, and "Who the devil can this be from?" * to the other	1 1 0
To a remarkably fine Antique Ring, having the head of a Monkey	0 16 6
A ditto, with blue stones	0 12 6
A ditto, with green ditto	0 12 6
A stuffed Green Parrot, a remarkable favorite of the late Lady W.	2 2 0
Sum Total	15 18 0
Deduction for Ready Money	0 13 6
	15 4 6
Mr. Brown's Profits for Brokerage . .	1 10 0
Sum Total	£16 14 6
Received of Clarence Linden, Esq., this day of 17—	

* One would not have thought these ingenious devices had been of so ancient a date as the year 17—.

It would have been no unamusing study to watch the expression of Clarence's face as it lengthened over each article until he had reached the final conclusion. He then carefully folded up the paper, restored it to Mr. Brown, with a low bow, and said, "Excuse me sir, I will not take advantage of your generosity; keep your parrot and other treasures for some more worthy person. I cannot accept of what you are pleased to term your very valuable *presents!*"

"Oh, very well, very well," said Mr. Brown, pocketing the paper, and seeming perfectly unconcerned at the termination of his proposals; "perhaps I can serve you in some other way?"

"In none, I thank you," replied Linden.

"Just consider, sir!—you will want lodgings: I can find them for you, cheaper than you can yourself; or perhaps you would prefer going into a nice, quiet, genteel family, where you can have both board and lodging, and be treated in every way as the pet child of the master?"

A thought crossed Linden's mind. He was going to stay in town some time; he was ignorant of its ways; he had neither friends nor relations, at least none whom he could visit and consult; moreover, hotels, he knew, were expensive; lodgings, though cheaper, might, if tolerably comfortable, greatly exceed the sum prudence would allow him to expend; would not this plan proposed by Mr. Brown, of going into a 'nice, quiet, genteel family,' be the most advisable one he could adopt? The generous benefactor of the late and ever-to-be-remembered Lady Waddilove perceived his advantage, and, making the most of Clarence's hesitation, continued—

"I know of a charming little abode, sir, situated in the suburbs of London, quite *rus in urbe*, as the scholars say; you can have a delightful little back parlor, looking out upon the garden, and all to yourself, I dare say."

"And pray, Mr. Brown," interrupted Linden, "what price do you think would be demanded for such enviable accommodation?—If you offer me them as '*a present*,' I shall have nothing to say to them."

"Oh, sir," answered Mr. Brown, "the price will be a trifle—a mere trifle; but I will inquire, and let you know the exact sum in the course of the day—all they want is a respectable, gen-

tlemanlike lodger; and I am sure so near a relation of Mrs. Minden will, upon my recommendation, be received with avidity. Then you won't have any of these valuable articles, sir? You'll repent it, sir—take my word for it—hem!"

"Since," replied Clarence drily, "your word appear of so much more value than your articles, pardon me if I prefer taking the former instead of the latter."

Mr. Brown forced a smile.—"Well, sir, very well, very well, indeed. You will not go out before two o'clock? and at that time I shall call upon you respecting the commission you have favored me with."

"I will await you," said Clarence; and he bowed Mr. Brown out of the room.

"Now, really," said Linden to himself, as he paced the narrow limits of his apartment, "I do not see what better plan I can pursue—but let me well consider what is my ultimate object. A high step in the world's ladder!—how is this to be obtained? First by the regular method of professions; but what profession should I adopt? The church is incompatible with my object—the army and navy with my means. Next come the irregular methods of adventure and enterprise—such as marriage with a fortune"—here he paused and looked at the glass—"the speculation of a political pamphlet, or an ode to the minister—attendance on some dying miser of my own name, without a relation in the world—or, in short, any other mode of making money that may decently offer itself. Now, situated as I am, without a friend in this great city, I might as well purchase my experience at as cheap a rate and in as brief a time as possible, nor do I see any plan of doing so more promising than that proposed by Mr. Brown."

These and such like reflections, joined to the inspiriting pages of the "Newgate Calendar," and "The Covent Garden Magazine," two works which Clarence dragged from their concealment under a black tea-tray, afforded him ample occupation till the hour of two, punctual to which time Mr. Morris Brown returned.

"Well sir," said Clarence, "what is your report?"

The friend of the late Lady W. wiped his brow and gave three long sighs before he replied: "A long walk, sir—a very long walk I have had; but I have succeeded. No thanks, sir—no thanks—the lady, a most charming, delightful, amiable woman, will receive you with pleasure—you will have the use of a back parlor (as I said) all the morning, and a beautiful little bed-room entirely to yourself—think of that, sir. You will have an egg for breakfast, and you will dine with the family at three o'clock: quite fashionable hours, you see, sir."

"And the terms?" said Linden, impatiently.

"Why, sir," replied Mr. Brown, "the lady was too genteel to talk to me about them—you had better walk with me to her house and see if you cannot yourself agree with her."

"I will," said Clarence. "Will you wait here till I have dressed?"

Mr. Brown bowed his assent.

"I might as well," thought Clarence, as he ascended to his bed-room, "inquire into the character of this gentleman, to whose good offices I am so rashly entrusting myself." He rang his bell—the chambermaid appeared, and was dismissed for the waiter. The character was soon asked, and soon given. For our reader's sake, we will somewhat enlarge upon it.

Mr. Morris Brown originally came into the world with the simple appellation of Moses, a name which his father—honest man—had, as the Minories can still testify, honorably borne before him. Scarcely, however, had the little Moses attained the age of five, when his father, for causes best known to himself, became a Christian. Somehow or other there is a most potent connection between the purse and the conscience, and accordingly the blessings of heaven descended in golden showers upon the proselyte. "I shall die worth a plum," said Moses the elder (who had taken unto himself the Christian cognomen of Brown); "I shall die worth a plum," repeated he, as he went one fine morning to speculate at the Exchange. A change of news, sharp and unexpected as a change of wind, lowered the stocks and blighted the plum. Mr. Brown was in the Gazette that week, and his wife in weeds for him the next. He left behind him, besides the said wife, several debts and his son Moses. Beggared by the former, our widow took a small shop in Wardour-street to support the latter. Patient, but enterprising—cautious of risking pounds, indefatigable in raising pence—the little Moses inherited the propensities of his Hebrew ancestors; and, though not so capable as his im-

mediate progenitor of making a fortune, he was at least far less likely to lose one.

In spite, however, of all the industry, both of mother and son, the gains of the shop were but scanty: to increase them capital was required, and all Mr. Moses Brown's capital lay in his brain. "It is a bad foundation," said the mother, with a sigh. "Not at all!" said the son, and, leaving the shop, he turned broker. Now a broker is a man who makes an income out of other people's funds—a gleaner of stray extravagances; and by doing the public the honor of living upon them, may fairly be termed a little sort of state minister in his way. What with haunting sales, hawking china, selling the curiosities of one old lady, and purchasing the same for another, Mr. Brown managed to enjoy a very comfortable existence. Great pains and small gains will at last invert their antitheses, and make little trouble and great profit; so that by the time Mr. Brown had attained his fortieth year, the petty shop had become a large warehouse; and, if the worthy Moses, now christianized into Morris, was not so sanguine as his father in the gathering of plums, he had been at least as fortunate in the collecting of windfalls. To say truth, the Abigail of the defunct Lady Waddilove had been no unprofitable helpmate to our broker. As ingenious as benevolent, she was the owner of certain rooms of great resort in the neighborhood of St. James's—rooms where caps and appointments were made better than anywhere else, and where credit was given, and character lost, upon terms equally advantageous to the accommodating Mrs. Brown.

Meanwhile her husband, continuing through liking what he had begun through necessity, slackened not his industry in augmenting his fortune; on the contrary, small profits were but a keener incentive to large ones—as the glutton only sharpened by luncheon his appetite for dinner. Still was Mr. Brown the very Alcibiades of brokers—the universal genius—suiting every man to his humor. Business, of whatever description, from the purchase of a borough to that of a brooch, was alike the object of Mr. Brown's most zealous pursuit: taverns, where country cousins put up—rustic habitations, where ancient maidens resided—auction, or barter—city, or hamlet—all were the same to that enterprising spirit, which made out of every acquaintance—a commission! Sagacious and acute, Mr. Brown perceived the value of eccentricity in covering design, and found, by experience, that whatever can be laughed at as odd will be gravely considered as harmless. Several of the broker's peculiarities were, therefore, more artificial than natural; and many were the sly bargains which he smuggled into effect under the comfortable cloak of singularity. No wonder, then, that the crafty Morris grew gradually in repute as a person of infinite utility and excellent qualifications; or that the penetrating friends of his deceased sire bowed to the thriving itinerant with a respect which they denied to many in loftier professions and more general esteem.

CHAPTER IX.

Trust me you have an exceeding fine lodging here—very neat and private.—BEN JONSON.

IT was a tolerably long walk to the abode of which the worthy broker spoke in such high terms of commendation. At length, at the suburbs towards Paddington, Mr. Brown stopped at a very small house: it stood rather retired from its surrounding neighbors, which were of a loftier and more pretending aspect than itself, and, in its awkward shape and pitiful bashfulness, looked exceedingly like a school-boy finding himself for the first time in a *grown up* party, and shrinking with all possible expedition into the obscurest corner he can dicover. Passing through a sort of garden, in which a spot of grass lay in the embraces of a stripe of gravel, Mr. Brown knocked upon a very bright knocker at a very new door. The latter was opened, and a footboy appeared.

"Is Mrs. Copperas within?" asked the broker.

"Yees, sir," said the boy.

"Show this gentleman and myself up stairs," resumed Brown.

"Yees," reiterated the lackey.

Up a singularly narrow staircase, into a singularly diminutive drawing-room, Clarence and his guide were ushered. There, seated on a little chair by a little work-table, with one foot on a little stool and one hand on a little book, was a little—very little lady.

"This is the young gentleman," said Mr.

Brown; and Clarence bowed low, in token of the introduction.

The lady returned the salutation with an affected bend, and said, in a mincing and grotesquely subdued tone—"You are desirous, sir, of entering into the bosom of my family. We possess accommodations of a most elegant description;—accustomed to the genteelest circles—enjoying the pure breezes of the Highgate hills—and presenting to any guest we may receive the attractions of a home rather than of a lodging, you will find our retreat no less eligible than unique. You are, I presume, sir, in some profession—some city avocation—or —or trade?"

"I have the misfortune," said he, smiling, "to belong to no profession."

The lady looked hard at the speaker, and then at the broker. With certain people, to belong to no profession is to be of no respectability.

"The most unexceptionable references will be given—and *required*," resumed Mrs. Copperas.

"Certainly," said Mr. Brown, "certainly, the gentleman is a relation of Mrs. Minden, a *very* old customer of mine."

"In that case," said Mrs. Copperas, "the affair is settled:" and, rising, she rung the bell, and ordered the footboy, whom she addressed by the grandiloquent name of *de Warens*, to show the gentleman the apartments. While Clarence was occupied in surveying the luxuries of a box at the top of the house, called a bed-chamber, which seemed just large and just hot enough for a chrysalis, and a corresponding box below, termed the back parlor, which would certainly *not* have been large enough for the said chrysalis, when turned into a butterfly, Mr. Morris Brown, after duly expatiating on the merits of Clarence, proceeded to speak of the terms; these were soon settled, for Clarence was yielding, and the lady not above three times as extortionate as she ought to have been. Before Linden left the house, the bargain was concluded. That night his trunks were removed to his new abode, and having with incredible difficulty been squeezed into the bedroom, Clarence surveyed them with the same astonishment with which the virtuoso beheld the flies in amber—

> Not that the things were either rich or rare,
> He wonder'd how the devil they got there!

CHAPTER X.

> Such scenes had tempered with a pensive grace,
> The maiden lustre of that faultless face;
> Had hung a sad and dreamlike spell upon
> The gliding music of her silver tone,
> And shaded the soft soul which loved to lie
> In the deep pathos of that volumed eye.
>
> —*O'Neill, or the Rebel.*

The love thus kindled between them was of no common or calculating nature; it was vigorous and delicious, and at times so suddenly intense as to appear to their young hearts for a moment or so, with almost an awful character.—*Inesilla.*

The reader will figure to himself a small chamber, in a remote wing of a large and noble mansion—the walls were covered with sketches, whose extreme delicacy of outline and coloring betrayed the sex of the artist; a few shelves filled with books supported vases of flowers. A harp stood neglected at the farther end of the room, and just above hung the slender prison of one of those golden wanderers from the Canary Isles, which bear to our colder land some of the gentlest music of their skies and zephyrs. The window, reaching to the ground, was open, and looked through the clusters of jessamine and honeysuckle which surrounded the low verandah beyond, upon thick and frequent copses of blossoming shrubs, redolent of spring, and sparkling in the sunny tears of a May shower, which had only just wept itself away. Embosomed in these little groves lay plots of flowers, girdled with turf as green as ever wooed the nightly dances of the fairies; and afar off, through one artful opening, the eye caught the glittering wanderings of water, on whose light and smiles the universal happiness of the young year seemed reflected.

But in that chamber, heedless of all around, and cold to the joy with which everything else, equally youthful, beautiful, and innocent, seemed breathing and inspired, sat a very young and lovely female. Her cheek leant upon her hand, and large tears flowed fast and burningly over the small and delicate fingers. The comb that had confined her tresses lay at her feet, and the high dress which concealed her swelling breast had been loosened, to give vent to the suffocating and indignant throbbings which had rebelled against its cincture—all appeared to announce that bitterness of grief when the mind, as it were, wreaks its scorn upon the body in its contempt for external seemings, and to proclaim that the

present more subdued and softened sorrow had only succeeded to a burst far less quiet and uncontrolled. Woe to those who eat the bread of dependence—their tears are wrung from the inmost sources of the heart.

Isabel St. Leger was the only child of a captain in the army, who died in her infancy; her mother had survived him but a few months; and to the reluctant care and cold affections of a distant and wealthy relation of the same name, the warm-hearted and penniless orphan was consigned. Major-General Cornelius St. Leger, whose riches had been purchased in India at the price of his constitution, was of a temper as hot as his curries, and he wreaked it the more unsparingly on his ward, because the superior ill-temper of his maiden sister had prevented his giving vent to it upon her. That sister, Miss Diana St. Leger, was a meagre gentlewoman of about six feet high, with a loud voice and commanding aspect. Long in awe of her brother, she rejoiced at heart to find some one whom she had such right and reason to make in awe of herself; and from the age of four to that of seventeen, Isabel suffered every insult and every degradation which could be inflicted upon her by the tyranny of her two protectors. Her spirit, however, was far from being broken by the rude shocks it received; on the contrary, her mind, gentleness itself to the kind, rose indignantly against the unjust. It was true that the sense of wrong did not break forth audibly; for, though susceptible, Isabel was meek, and her pride was concealed by the outward softness and feminacy of her temper; but she stole away from those who had wounded her heart, or trampled upon its feelings, and nourished with secret, but passionate, tears the memory of the harshness or injustice she had endured. Yet she was not vindictive—her resentment was a noble not a debasing feeling; once, when she was yet a child, Miss Diana was attacked with a fever of the most malignant and infectious kind; her brother loved himself far too well to risk his safety by attending her; the servants were too happy to wreak their hatred under the pretence of obeying their fears; they consequently followed the example of their master; and Miss Diana St. Leger might have gone down to her ancesters "unwept, unhonored, and unsung," if Isabel had not volunteered and enforced her attendance. Hour after hour her fairy form flitted around the sick chamber, or sat mute and breathless by the feverish bed; she had neither fear for contagion nor bitterness for past oppression; everything vanished beneath the one hope of serving, the one gratification of feeling herself, in the wide waste of creation, not utterly without use, as she had been hitherto without friends.

Miss St. Leger recovered. "For your recovery, in the first place," said the doctor, "you will thank Heaven; in the second you will thank your young relation," and for several days the convalescent did overwhelm the happy Isabel with her praises and caresses. But this change did not last long: the chaste Diana had been too spoiled by the prosperity of many years, for the sickness of a single month to effect much good in her disposition, Her old habits were soon resumed; and though it is probable that her *heart* was in reality softened towards the poor Isabel, that softening by no means extended to her temper. In truth, the brother and sister were not without affection for one so beautiful and good, but they had been torturing slaves all their lives, and their affection was, and could be, but that of a task-master or a planter.

But Isabel was the only relation who ever appeared within their walls, and among the guests, with whom the luxurious mansion was crowded, she passed no less for the heiress than the dependant; to her, therefore, was offered the homage of many lips and hearts, and if her pride was perpetually galled, and her feelings insulted in private, her vanity (had that equalled her pride, and her feelings, in its susceptibility) would in no slight measure have recompensed her in public. Unhappily, however, her vanity was the least prominent quality she possessed; and the compliments of mercenary adulation were not more rejected by her heart than despised by her understanding.

Yet did she bear within her a deep fund of buried tenderness, and a mine of girlish and enthusiastic romance;—dangerous gifts to one so situated, which, while they gave to her secret moments of solitude a powerful, but vague attraction, probably only prepared for her future years the snare which might betray them into error, or the delusion which would color them with regret.

Among those whom the ostentatious hospitality of General St. Leger attracted to his

house, was one of very different character and pretensions to the rest. Formed to be unpopular with the generality of men, the very qualities that made him so were those which principally fascinate the higher description of women of ancient birth, which rendered still more displeasing the pride and coldness of his mien; of talents peculiarly framed to attract interest as well as esteem; of a deep and somewhat morbid melancholy, which, while it turned from ordinary ties, inclined yearningly towards passionate affections; of a temper, where romance was only concealed from the many, to become more seductive to the few; unsocial, but benevolent; disliked, but respected; of the austerest demeanor, but of passions the most fervid, though the most carefully concealed;—this man united within himself all that repels the common mass of his species, and all that irresistibly wins and fascinates the rare and romantic few. To these qualities were added a carriage and bearing of that high and commanding order, which men mistake for arrogance and pretension, and women overrate in proportion to its contrast to their own. Something of mystery there was in the commencement of the deep and eventful love which took place between this person and Isabel, which I have never been able to learn: whatever it was, it seemed to expedite and heighten the ordinary progress of love; and when in the dim twilight, beneath the first melancholy smile of the earliest star, their hearts opened audibly to each other, that confession had been made silently long since, and registered in the inmost recesses of the soul.

But their passion, which began in prosperity, was soon darkened. Whether he took offence at the haughtiness of Isabel's lover, or whether he desired to retain about him an object which he could torment and tyrannize over, no sooner did the General discover the attachment of his young relation, than he peremptorily forbade its indulgence, and assumed so insolent and overbearing an air towards the lover, that the latter felt he could no longer repeat his visits to, or even continue his acquaintance with, the nabob.

To add to these adverse circumstances, a relation of the lover, from whom his expectations had been large, was so enraged, not only at the insult his cousin had received, but at the very idea of his forming an alliance with one in so dependent a situation, and connected with such new blood, as Isabel St. Leger, that, with that arrogance which relations, however distant, think themselves authorized to assume, he enjoined his cousin, upon pain of forfeiture of favor and fortune, to renounce all idea of so disparaging an alliance. The one thus addressed was not of a temper patiently to submit to such threats; he answered them with disdain, and the breach, so dangerous to his pecuniary interest, was already begun.

So far had the history of our lover proceeded at the time in which we have introduced Isabel to the reader, and described to him the chamber to which, in all her troubles and humiliations, she was accustomed to fly, as to a sad, but still unviolated, sanctuary of retreat.

The quiet of this asylum was first broken by a slight rustling among the leaves; but Isabel's back was turned towards the window, and in the engrossment of her feelings she heard it not. The thick copse that darkened the left side of the verandah was pierced, and a man passed within the covered space, and stood still and silent before the window, intently gazing upon the figure which (though the face was turned from him) betrayed in its proportions that beauty which, in his eyes, had neither an equal nor a fault.

The figure of the stranger, though not very tall, was above the ordinary height, and gracefully, rather than robustly, formed. He was dressed in the darkest colors and the simplest fashion, which rendered yet more striking the nobleness of his mien, as well as the clear and almost delicate paleness of his complexion; his features were finely and accurately formed; and had not ill health, long travel, or severe thought deepened too much the lines of the countenance, and sharpened its contour, the classic perfection of those features would have rendered him undeniably and even eminently handsome: as it was, the paleness and the somewhat worn character of his face, joined to an expression, at first glance, rather haughty and repellent, made him lose in physical what he certainly gained in intellectual beauty. His eyes were large, deep, and melancholy, and had the hat which now hung over his brow been removed, it would have displayed a forehead of remarkable boldness and power.

Altogether, the face was cast in a rare and intellectual mould, and, if wanting in those

more luxuriant attractions common to the age of the stranger, who could scarcely have attained his twenty-sixth year, it betokened, at least, that predominance of mind over body, which, in some eyes, is the most requisite characteristic of masculine beauty.

With a soft and noiseless step, the stranger moved from his station without the window, and, entering the room, stole towards the spot on which Isabel was sitting. He leant over her chair, and his eye rested upon his own picture, and a letter in his own writing, over which the tears of the young orphan flowed fast.

A moment more of agitated happiness for one—of unconscious and continued sadness for the other—

'Tis past—her lover's at her feet.

And what indeed "was to them the world beside, with all its changes of time and tide?" Joy—hope—all blissful and bright sensations, lay mingled like meeting waters, in one sunny stream of heartfelt and unfathomable enjoyment—but this passed away, and the remembrance of bitterness and evil succeeded.

"Oh, Algernon!" said Isabel, in a low voice, "is this your promise?"

"Believe me," said Mordaunt, for it was indeed he, "I struggled long with my feelings, but in vain; and for both our sakes, I rejoice at the conquest they obtained. I listened only to a deceitful delusion when I imagined I was obeying the dictates of reason. Ah, dearest, why should we part for the sake of dubious and distant evils, when the misery of absence is the most certain, the most increasing evil we can endure?"

"For your sake, and therefore for mine!" interrupted Isabel, struggling with her tears. "I am a beggar and an outcast. You must not link your fate with mine. I could bear, Heaven knows how willingly, poverty and all its evils *for* you and *with* you; but I cannot *bring* them upon you."

"Nor will you," said Mordaunt passionately, as he covered the hand he held with his burning kisses. "Have I not enough for both of us? It is my love, not poverty, that I beseech you to share."

"No! Algernon, you cannot deceive me: your own estate will be torn from you by the law: if you marry me, your cousin will not assist you: I, you know too well, can command nothing; and I shall see you, for whom in my fond and bright dreams I have presaged every thing great and exalted, buried in an obscurity from which your talents can never rise, and suffering the pangs of poverty, and dependence, and humiliation like my own—and—and—I—should be the wretch who caused you all. Never, Algernon, never!—I love you too—too well!"

But the effort which wrung forth the determination of the tone in which these words were uttered was too violent to endure; and, as the full desolation of her despair crowded fast and dark upon the orphan's mind, she sank back upon her chair in very sickness of soul, nor heeded, in her unconscious misery, that her hand was yet clasped by her lover, and that her head drooped upon his bosom.

"Isabel," he said, in a low, sweet tone, which to her ear seemed the concentration of all earthly music—"Isabel—look up—my own—my beloved—look up and hear me. Perhaps you say truly when you tell me that the possessions of my house shall melt away from me, and that my relation will not offer to me the precarious bounty which, even if he did offer, I would reject; but, dearest, are there not a thousand paths open to me—the law—the state—the army?—you are silent, Isabel—speak!"

Isabel did not reply, but the soft eyes which rested upon his told, in their despondency, how little her reason was satisfied by the arguments he urged.

"Besides," he continued, "we know not yet whether the law may not decide in my favor—at all events, years may pass before the judgment is given—those years make the prime and verdure of our lives—let us not waste them in mourning over blighted hopes and severed hearts—let us snatch what happiness is yet in our power, nor anticipate, while the heavens are still bright above us, the burden of the thunder or the cloud."

Isabel was one of the least selfish and most devoted of human beings, yet she must be forgiven if at that moment her resolution faltered, and the overpowering thought of being in reality *his* for ever flashed upon her mind. It passed from her the moment it was formed, and rising from a situation in which the touch of that dear hand, and the breath of those wooing lips endangered the virtue, and weak-

ened the strength, of her resolves, she withdrew herself from his grasp, and while she averted her eyes, which dared not encounter his, she said in a low but firm voice—

"It is in vain, Algernon; it is in vain. I can be to you nothing but a blight or burthen, nothing but a source of privation and anguish. Think you that I *will* be this?—no, I will not darken your fair hopes, and impede your reasonable ambition. Go (and here her voice faltered for a moment, but soon recovered its tone), go, Algernon, *dear* Algernon; and, if my foolish heart will not ask you to think of me no more, I can at least implore you to think of me only as one who would die rather than cost you a moment of that poverty and debasement, the bitterness of which she has felt herself, and who, for that very reason, tears herself away from you for ever."

"Stay, Isabel, stay!" cried Mordaunt, as he caught hold of her robe, "give me but one word more, and you shall leave me. Say that if I can create for myself a new source of independence; if I can carve out a road where the ambition you erroneously impute to me can be gratified, as well as the more moderate wishes our station has made natural to us to form—say, that if I do this, I may permit myself to hope—say, that *when* I have done it, I may claim you as my own!"

Isabel paused, and turned once more her face towards his own. Her lips moved, and though the words died within her heart, yet Mordaunt read well their import in the blushing cheek and the heaving bosom, and the lips which one ray of hope and comfort was sufficient to kindle into smiles. He gazed, and all obstacles, all difficulties, disappeared; the gulf of time seemed past, and he felt as if already he had earned and won his reward.

He approached her yet nearer; one kiss on those lips, one pressure of that thrilling hand, one long, last, embrace of that shrinking and trembling form—and then, as the door closed upon his view, he felt that the sunshine of nature had passed away, and that in the midst of the laughing and peopled earth *he* stood in darkness and alone.

CHAPTER XI.

He who would know mankind must be at home with all men.—STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

WE left Clarence safely deposited in his little lodgings. Whether from the heat of his apartment or the restlessness a migration of beds produces in certain constitutions, his slumbers on the first night of his arrival were disturbed and brief. He rose early and descended to the parlor; Mr. de Warens, the nobly appellatived foot-boy, was laying the breakfast cloth. From three painted shelves which constituted the library of "Copperas Bower," as its owners gracefully called their habitation, Clarence took down a book very prettily bound; it was "Poems by a Nobleman." No sooner had he read two pages than he did exactly what the reader would have done, and restored the volume respectfully to its place. He then drew his chair towards the window, and wistfully eyed sundry ancient nursery maids, who were leading their infant charges to the "fresh fields, and pastures new," of what is now the Regent's Park.

In about an hour Mrs. Copperas descended, and mutual compliments were exchanged; to her succeeded Mr. Copperas, who was well scolded for his laziness: and to them, Master Adolphus Copperas, who was also chidingly termed a naughty darling, for the same offence. Now then Mrs. Copperas prepared the tea, which she did in the approved method, adopted by all ladies to whom economy is dearer than renown—viz. the least possible quantity of the *soi-disant* Chinese plant was first sprinkled by the least possible quantity of hot water! after this mixture had become as black and as bitter as it could possibly be, without any adjunct from the apothecary's skill, it was suddenly drenched with a copious diffusion, and as suddenly poured forth, weak, washy, and abominable, into four cups, severally appertaining unto the four partakers of the matutinal nectar.

Then the conversation began to flow. Mrs. Copperas was a fine lady, and a sentimentalist—very observant of the little niceties of phrase and manner. Mr. Copperas was a stock-jobber, and a wit, loved a good hit in each capacity, was very round, very short, and very much like a John Dory, and saw in the features and mind of the little Copperas, the exact representative of himself.

"Adolphus, my love," said Mrs. Copperas, "mind what I told you and sit upright—Mr. Linden, will you allow me to cut you a *leetle* piece of this roll?"

"Thank you," said Clarence, "I will trouble you rather for the whole of it."

Conceive Mrs. Copperas's dismay! from that moment she saw herself eaten out of house and home; besides, as she afterwards observed to her friend Miss Barbara York, the "vulgarity of such an amazing appetite!"

"Any commands in the city, Mr. Linden?" asked the husband: "a coach will pass by our door in a few minutes—must be on 'Change in half an hour. Come, my love, another cup of tea—make haste—I have scarcely a moment to take *my fare* for the inside, before coachee takes *his* for the outside. Ha! ha! ha! Mr. Linden."

"Lord, Mr. Copperas," said his helpmate, "how can you be so silly? setting such an example to your son, too—never mind him, Adolphus, my love—fie, child, a'n't you ashamed of yourself?—never put the spoon in your cup till you have done tea: I must really send you to school, to learn manners. —We have a very pretty little collection of books here, Mr. Linden, if you would like to read an hour or two after breakfast—child, take your hands out of your pockets—all the best English classics, I believe—Telemachus, and Young's Night Thoughts, and Joseph Andrews, and the Spectator, and Pope's Iliad, and Creech's Lucretius; but you will look over them yourself! This is Liberty Hall, as well as Copperas Bower, Mr. Linden!"

"Well, my love," said the stock-jobber, "I believe I must be off. Here Tom—Tom—(Mr. de Warens had just entered the room with some more hot water, to weaken still farther "the poor remains of what was once" —the tea!)—Tom, just run out and stop the coach, it will be by in five minutes."

"Have not I prayed, and besought you, many and many a time, Mr. Copperas," said the lady, rebukingly, "not to call De Warens by his christian name? Don't you know, that all people in genteel life, who only keep one servant, invariably call him by his surname, as if he were the butler, you know?"

"Now, that is too good, my love," said Copperas. "I wlll call poor Tom by any surname you please, but I really can't pass him off for a butler! Ha—ha—ha—you must excuse me there, my love!"

"And pray, why not, Mr. Copperas! I have known many a butler bungle more at a cork than he does; and pray tell me, who did you ever see wait better at dinner?"

"He wait at dinner, my love! it is not he who waits."

"Who then, Mr. Copperas?"

"Why *we*, my love—it's we who wait for dinner—but that's the cook's fault, not his."

"Pshaw, Mr. Copperas—Adolphus, my love, sit upright, darling."

Here de Warens cried from the bottom of the stairs—

"Measter, the coach be coming up."

"There won't be room for it to turn then," said the facetious Mr. Copperas, looking round the apartment, as if he took the words literally.

"What coach is it, boy?"

Now that was not the age in which coaches scoured the city, every half-hour, and Mr. Copperas knew the name of the coach, as well as he knew his own.

"It be the Swallow coach, sir."

"Oh, very well: then since I have swallowed in the roll, I will now roll in the Swallow—ha—ha—ha! Good-bye, Mr. Linden."

No sooner had the witty stock-jobber left the room. than Mrs. Copperas seemed to expand into a new existence. "My husband, sir," said she, apologetically, "is *so* odd, but he's an excellent sterling character; and that, you know, Mr. Linden, tells more in the bosom of a family than all the shining qualities which captivate the imagination. I am sure, Mr. Linden, that the moralist is right in admonishing us to prefer the gold to the tinsel. I have now been married some years, and every year seems happier than the last; but then, Mr. Linden, it is such a pleasure to contemplate the growing graces of the sweet pledge of our mutual love—Adolphus, my dear, keep your feet still, and take your hands out of your pockets!"

A short pause ensued.

"We see a great deal of company," said Mrs. Copperas, pompously, "and of the very best description. Sometimes we are favored by the society of the great Mr. Talbot, a gentleman of immense fortune, and quite the courtier: he is, it is true, a little eccentric in his dress; but then he was a celebrated beau in

his young days. He is our next neighbor; you can see his house out of the window, just across the garden — there! We have also, sometimes, our humble board graced by a very elegant friend of mine, Miss Barbara York, a lady of very high connections, her first cousin was a lord mayor—Adolphus, my dear, what are you about?—Well, Mr. Linden, you will find your retreat quite undisturbed; I must go about the household affairs; not that I do anything more than superintend, you know, sir; but I think no lady should be above consulting her husband's interests—that's what I call true old English conjugal affection.—Come, Adolphus, my dear."

And Clarence was now alone. "I fear," thought he, "that I shall get on very indifferently with these people. But it will not do for me to be misanthropical, (and, as Dr. Latinas was wont to say,) the great merit of philosophy, when we cannot *command* circumstances, is to *reconcile* us to them.

CHAPTER XII.

A retired beau is one of the most instructive spectacles in the world.—STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

IT was quite true that Mrs. Copperas saw a great deal of company, for at a certain charge, upon certain days, any individual might have the honor of sharing her family repast; and many, of various callings, though chiefly in commercial life, met at her miscellaneous board. Clarence must, indeed, have been difficult to please, or obtuse of observation, if, in the variety of her guests, he had not found something either to interest or amuse him. Heavens! what a motley group were accustomed, twice in the week, to assemble there? the little dining parlor seemed a human oven; and it must be owned that Clarence was no slight magnet of attraction to the female part of the guests. Mrs. Copperas's bosom friend in especial, the accomplished Miss Barbara York, darted the most tender glances on the handsome young stranger; but whether or not a nose remarkably prominent and long, prevented the glances from taking full effect, it is certain that Clarence seldom repaid them with that affectionate ardor which Miss Barbara York had ventured to anticipate. The only persons indeed for whom he felt any sympathetic attraction, were of the same sex as himself. The one was Mr. Talbot, the old gentleman whom Mrs. Copperas had described as the perfect courtier; the other, a young artist of the name of Warner. Talbot, to Clarence's great astonishment (for Mrs. Copperas's eulogy had prepared him for something eminently displeasing), was a man of birth, fortune, and manners peculiarly graceful and attractive. It is true, however, that, despite of his vicinity, and Mrs. Copperas's urgent solicitations, he very seldom honored her with his company, and he always cautiously sent over his servant in the morning to inquire the names and number of her expected guests: nor was he ever known to share the plenteous board of the stock-jobber's lady whenever any other partaker of its dainties, save Clarence and the young artist, were present. The latter, the old gentleman really liked: and as, for one truly well born, and well bred, there is no vulgarity except in the mind, the slender means, obscure birth, and struggling profession of Warner were circumstances which as they increased the merit of a gentle manner and a fine mind, spoke rather in his favor than the reverse. Mr. Talbot was greatly struck by Clarence Linden's conversation and appearance; and, indeed, there was in Talbot's tastes so strong a bias to aristocratic externals, that Clarence's air alone would have been sufficient to win the good graces of a man who had, perhaps, more than most courtiers of his time, cultivated the arts of manner, and the secrets of address.

"You will call upon me soon?" said he to Clarence, when, after dining one day with the Copperases and their inmate, he rose to return home. And Clarence, delighted with the urbanity and liveliness of his new acquaintance, promised that he would.

Accordingly the next day, Clarance called upon Mr. Talbot. The house, as Mrs. Copperas had before said, adjoined her own, and was only separated from it by a garden. It was a dull mansion of brick, which had disdained the frippery of paint and white-washing, and had indeed been built many years previously to the erection of the modern habitations which surrounded it. It was, therefore, as a consequence of this priority of birth, more sombre than the rest, and had a peculiarly forlorn and solitary look. As Clarence approached

the door, he was struck with the size of the house—it was of very considerable extent, and in the more favorable situations of London would have passed for a very desirable and spacious tenement. An old man, whose accurate precision of dress bespoke the tastes of the master, opened the door, and after ushering Clarence through two long, and to his surprise, almost splendidly furnished rooms, led him into a third, where seated at a small writing-table, he found Mr. Talbot. That person, one whom Clarence then little thought would hereafter exercise no small influence over his fate, was of a figure and countenance well worthy the notice of a description.

His own hair quite white was carefully and artificially curled, and gave a Grecian cast to features whose original delicacy, and exact, though small proportions, not even age could destroy. His eyes were large, black, and sparkled with almost youthful vivacity; and his mouth, which was the best feature he possessed, developed teeth, white and even as rows of ivory. Though small and somewhat too slender in the proportions of his figure, nothing could exceed the ease and the grace of his motions and air; and his dress, though singularly rich in its materials, eccentric in its fashion, and from its evident study, unseemly to his years, served nevertheless to render rather venerable than ridiculous a mien which could almost have carried off any absurdity, and which the fashion of the garb peculiarly became. The *tout ensemble* was certainly that of a man who was still vain of his exterior, and conscious of its effect; and it was as certainly impossible to converse with Mr. Talbot for five minutes, without merging every less respectful impression, in the magical fascination of his manner.

"I thank you, Mr. Linden," said Talbot, rising, "for your accepting so readily an old man's invitation. If I have felt pleasure in discovering that we were to be neighbors, you may judge what that pleasure is to-day at finding you my visitor."

Clarence, who, to do him justice, was always ready at returning a fine speech, replied in a similar strain, and the conversation flowed on agreeably enough. There was more than a moderate collection of books in the room, and this circumstance led Clarence to allude to literary subjects; these Mr. Talbot took up with avidity, and touched with a light but graceful criticism upon many of the then modern, and some of the older, writers. He seemed delighted to find himself understood and appreciated by Clarence, and every moment of Linden's visit served to ripen their acquaintance into intimacy. At length they talked upon Copperas Bower and its inmates.

"You will find your host and hostess," said the old gentleman, "certainly of a different order from the persons with whom it is easy to see you have associated; but, at your happy age, a year or two may be very well thrown away upon observing the manners and customs of those whom, in later life, you may often be called upon to conciliate, or perhaps to control. That man will never be a perfect gentleman who lives only with gentlemen. To be a man of the world, we must view that world in every grade, and in every perspective. In short, the most practical art of wisdom, is that which extracts from things the very quality they least appear to possess; and the actor in the world, like the actor on the stage, should find 'a basket-hilted sword very convenient to carry milk in.'* As for me, I have survived my relations and friends. I cannot keep late hours, nor adhere to the unhealthy customs of good society; nor do I think that, to a man of my age and habits, any remuneration would adequately repay the sacrifice of health or comfort. I am, therefore, well content to sink into a hermitage in an obscure corner of this great town, and only occasionally to revive my 'past remembrances of higher state,' by admitting a few old acquaintances to drink my bachelor's tea, and talk over the news of the day. Hence, you see, Mr. Linden, I pick up two or three novel anecdotes of state and scandal, and maintain my importance at Copperas Bower, by retailing them second hand.

"Now that you are one of the inmates of that abode, I shall be more frequently its guest. By-the-by, I will let you into a secret: know that I am somewhat a lover of the marvellous, and like to indulge a little embellishing exaggeration in any place where there is no chance of finding me out. Mind, therefore, my dear Mr. Linden, that you take no ungenerous advantage of this confession; but suffer me, now and then, to tell my stories my own way, even

* See the witty inventory of a player's goods in the Tatler.

when you think truth would require me to tell them in another."

"Certainly," said Clarence, laughing; "let us make an agreement: you shall tell your stories as you please, if you will grant me the same liberty in paying my compliments; and if I laugh aloud at the stories, you shall promise me not to laugh aloud at the compliments."

"It is a bond," said Talbot; "and a very fit exchange of service it is. It will be a problem in human nature to see who has the best of it: you shall pay your court by flattering the people present, and I mine, by abusing those absent. Now, in spite of your youth and curling locks, I will wager that I succeed the best; for in vanity there is so great a mixture of envy that no compliment is like a judicious abuse—to enchant your acquaintance, ridicule his friends."

"Ah, sir," said Clarence, "this opinion of yours is, I trust, a little in the French school, where brilliancy is more studied that truth, and where an ill opinion of our species always has the merit of passing for profound."

Talbot smiled, and shook his head. "My dear young friend," said he, "it is quite right that you, who are coming into the world, should think well of it; and it is also quite right that I, who am going out of it, should console myself by trying to despise it. However, let me tell you, my young friend, that he whose opinion of mankind is not too elevated will always be the most benevolent, because the most indulgent, to those errors incidental to human imperfection: to place our nature in too flattering a view is only to court disappointment, and end in misanthropy. The man who sets out with expecting to find all his fellow creatures heroes of virtue, will conclude by condemning them as monsters of vice; and, on the contrary, the least exacting judge of actions will be the most lenient. If God, in his own perfection, did not see so many frailties in us, think you he would be so gracious to our virtues?"

"And yet," said Clarence, "we remark every day examples of the highest excellence."

"Yes," replied Talbot, "of the *highest*, but not of the most *constant*, excellence. He knows very little of the human heart who imagines we cannot do a good action; but, alas! he knows still less of it who supposes we can be always doing good actions. In exactly the same ratio we see every day the greatest crimes are committed; but we find no wretch so depraved as to be always committing crimes. Man cannot be perfect even in guilt."

In this manner Talbot and his young visitor conversed, till Clarence, after a stay of unwarrantable length, rose to depart.

"Well," said Talbot, "if we now rightly understand each other, we shall be the best friends in the world. As we shall expect great things from each other sometimes, we will have no scruple in exacting a heroic sacrifice every now and then; for instance—I will ask you to punish yourself by an occasional *tete-a-tete* with an ancient gentleman; and, as we can also, by the same reasoning, pardon great faults in each other, if they are not often committed, so I will forgive you, with all my heart, whenever you refuse my invitations, if you do not refuse them often. And now farewell till we meet again."

It seemed singular, and almost unnatural to Linden, that a man like Talbot, of birth, fortune, and great fastidiousness of taste and temper, should have formed any sort of acquaintance, however slight and distant, with the facetious stock-jobber and his wife; but the fact is easily explained by a reference to the vanity which we shall see hereafter made the ruling passion of Talbot's nature. This vanity, which branching forth into a thousand eccentricities, displayed itself in the singularity of his dress, the studied yet graceful warmth of his manner, his attention to the minutiæ of life, his desire, craving and insatiate, to receive from every one, however insignificant, his *obolum* of admiration;—this vanity, once flattered by the obsequious homage it obtained from the wonder and reverence of the Copperases, reconciled his taste to the disgust it so frequently and necessarily conceived; and, having in great measure resigned his former acquaintance, and wholly outlived his friends, he was contented to purchase the applause which had become to him a necessary of life, at the humble market more immediately at his command.

There is no dilemma in which Vanity cannot find an expedient to develop its form—no stream of circumstances in which its buoyant and light nature will not rise to float upon the surface. And its ingenuity is as fertile as that of the player who (his wardrobe allowing him no other method of playing the fop) could still

exhibit the prevalent passion for distinction by wearing stockings of different colors.

CHAPTER XIII.

> Who dares
> Interpret then my life for me, as 'twere
> One of the undistinguishable many?
> —COLERIDGE'S *Wallenstein.*

THE first time Clarence had observed the young artist, he had taken a deep interest in his appearance. Pale, thin, undersized, and slightly deformed, the sanctifying mind still shed over the humble frame a spell more powerful than beauty. Absent in manner, melancholy in air, and never conversing except upon subjects upon which his imagination was excited, there was yet a gentleness about him which could not fail to conciliate and prepossess; nor did Clarence omit any opportunity to soften his reserve, and wind himself into his more intimate acquaintance. Warner, the only support of an aged and infirm grandmother (who had survived her immediate children), was distantly related to Mrs. Copperas; and that lady extended to him, with ostentatious benevolence, her favor and support. It is true, that she did not impoverish the young Adolphus to enrich her kinsman, but she allowed him a seat at her hospitable board, whenever it was not otherwise filled; and all that she demanded in return was a picture of herself, another of Mr. Copperas, a third of Master Adolphus, a fourth of the black cat, and from time to time sundry other lesser productions of his genius, of which, through the agency of Mr. Brown, she secretly disposed at a price that sufficiently remunerated her for whatever havoc the slender appetite of the young painter was able to effect.

By this arrangement, Clarence had many opportunities of gaining that intimacy with Warner which had become to him an object; and though the painter, constitutionally diffident and shy, was at first averse to, and even awed by, the ease, boldness, fluent speech, and confident address of a man much younger than myself, yet at last he could not resist the being decoyed into familiarity; and the youthful pair gradually advanced from companionship into friendship. There was a striking contrast between the two; Clarence was bold and frank, Warner close and timid. Both had superior abilities—but the abilities of Clarence were for action, those of Warner for art: both were ambitious, but the ambition of Clarence was that of circumstances rather than character; compelled to carve his own fortunes without sympathy or aid, he braced his mind to the effort, though naturally too gay for the austerity, and too genial for the selfishness, of ambition. But the very essence of Warner's nature was the feverish desire of fame; it poured through his veins like lava; it preyed as a worm upon his cheek; it corroded his natural sleep; it blackened the color of his thoughts; it shut out, as with an impenetrable wall, the wholesome energies and enjoyments and objects of living men; and, taking from him all the vividness of the present, all the tenderness of the past, constrained his heart to dwell for ever and for ever amidst the dim and shadowy chimeras of a future he was fated never to enjoy.

But these differences of character, so far from disturbing, rather cemented their friendship; and while Warner (notwithstanding his advantage of age) paid involuntary deference to the stronger character of Clarence, he, in his turn, derived that species of pleasure by which he was most gratified, from the affectionate and unenvious interest Clarence took in his speculations of future distinction, and the unwearying admiration with which he would sit by his side, and watch the colors start from the canvas, beneath the real, though uncultured, genius of the youthful painter. Hitherto, Warner had bounded his attempts to some of the lesser efforts of the art; he had now yielded to the urgent enthusiasm of his nature, and conceived the plan of an historical picture. Oh! what sleepless nights, what struggles of the teeming fancy with the dense brain, what labors of the untiring thought, wearing and intense as disease itself, did it cost the ambitious artist to work out in the stillness of his soul, and from its confused and conflicting images, the design of this long meditated and idolized performance. But when it *was* designed; when shape upon shape grew and swelled, and glowed from the darkness of previous thought upon the painter's mind; when, shutting his eyes in the very credulity of delight, the whole work arose before him, glossy with its fresh hues, bright, completed, faultless, ar-

rayed, as it were, and decked out for immortality —oh! then what a full and gushing moment of rapture broke like a released stream upon his soul! What a recompense for wasted years, health, and hope! What a coronal to the visions and transports of Genius; brief, it is true, but how steeped in the very halo of a light that might well be deemed the glory of heaven!

But the vision fades, the gorgeous shapes sweep on into darkness, and, waking from his reverie, the artist sees before him only the dull walls of his narrow chamber; the canvas stretched a blank upon its frame; the works, maimed, crude, unfinished, of an inexperienced hand, lying idly around; and feels himself—*himself*, but one moment before the creator of a world of wonders, the master spirit of shapes glorious and majestical beyond the shapes of men—dashed down from his momentary height, and despoiled both of his sorcery and his throne.

It was just in such a moment that Warner, starting up, saw Linden (who had silently entered his room) standing motionless before him.

"Oh! Linden," said the artist, "I have had so superb a dream—a dream which, though I have before snatched some such vision by fits and glimpses, I never beheld so realized, so perfect as now; and—but you shall see, you shall judge for yourself; I will sketch out the design for you;" and with a piece of chalk, and a rapid hand, Warner conveyed to Linden the outline of his conception. His young friend was eager in his praise and his predictions of renown, and Warner listened to him with a fondness, which spread over his pale cheek a richer flush than lover ever caught from the whispers of his beloved.

"Yes," said he, as he rose, and his sunken and small eye flashed out with a feverish brightness, "yes, if my hand does not fail my thought, it shall rival even—" Here the young painter stopped short, abashed at that indiscretion of enthusiasm about to utter to another the hoarded vanities hitherto locked in his heart of hearts as a sealed secret, almost from himself.

"But come," said Clarence, affectionately, "your hand is feverish and dry, and of late you have seemed more languid than you were wont—come, Warner, you want exercise: it is a beautiful evening, and you shall explain your picture still farther to me as we walk."

Accustomed to yield to Clarence, Warner mechanically and abstractedly obeyed; they walked out into the open streets.

"Look around us," said Warner, pausing, "look among this toiling, and busy, and sordid mass of beings, who claim with us the fellowship of clay. The poor labor, the rich feast; the only distinction between them is that of the insect and the brute; like them they fulfil the same end, and share the same oblivion; they die, a new race springs up, and the very grass upon their graves fades not so soon as their memory. Who, that is conscious of a higher nature, would not pine and fret himself away to be confounded with these? Who would not burn, and sicken, and parch, with a delirious longing to divorce himself from so vile a herd? What have their petty pleasures, and their mean aims to atone for the abasement of grinding down our spirits to their level? Is not the distinction from their blended and common name a sufficient recompense for all that ambition suffers or foregoes? Oh, for one brief hour (I ask no more) of living honor, one feeling of conscious, unfearing certainty, that Fame has conquered Death; and then for this humble and impotent clay, this drag on the spirit which it does not assist but fetter, this wretched machine of pains and aches, and feverish throbbings, and vexed inquietudes, why, let the worms consume it, and the grave hide—for Fame there is *no* grave."

At that moment one of those unfortunate women, who earn their polluted sustenance by becoming the hypocrites of passion, abruptly accosted them.

"Miserable wretch!" said Warner, loathingly, as he pushed her aside; but Clarence, with a kindlier feeling, noticed that her haggard cheek was wet with tears, and that her frame, weak and trembling, could scarcely support itself; he, therefore, with that promptitude of charity which gives ere it discriminates, put some pecuniary assistance in her hand, and joined his comrade.

"You would not have spoken so tauntingly to the poor girl had you remarked her distress," said Clarence.

"And why," said Warner, mournfully, "why be so cruel as to prolong, even for a few hours, an existence which mercy would only seek to

bring nearer to the tomb? That unfortunate is but one of the herd, one of the victims to pleasures which debase by their progress, and ruin by their end. Yet perhaps she is not worse than the usual followers of love;—of love—that passion the most worshipped, yet the least divine,—selfish and exacting,—drawing its aliment from destruction, and its very nature from tears."

"Nay," said Clarence, "you confound the two loves, the Eros and the Anteros, gods whom my good tutor was wont so sedulously to distinguish: you surely do not inveigh thus against *all* love?"

"I cry you mercy," said Warner, with something of sarcasm in his pensiveness of tone. "We must not dispute, so I will hold my peace; but make love all you will, what are the false smiles of a lip which a few years can blight as an autumn leaf? what the homage of a heart as feeble and mortal as your own? Why, I with a few strokes of a little hair, and an idle mixture of worthless colors, will create a beauty in whose mouth there shall be no hollowness—in whose lip there shall be no fading—there, in your admiration you shall have no need of flattery, and no fear of falsehood; you shall not be stung with jealousy, nor maddened with treachery; nor watch with a breaking heart over waning bloom, and departing health, till the grave open, and your perishable paradise is *not*. No—the mimic work is mightier than the original, for it outlasts it; your love cannot wither it, or your desertion destroy—your very death, as the being who called it into life, only stamps it with a holier value."

"And so then," said Clarence, "you would seriously relinquish, for the mute copy of the mere features, those affections which no painting can express?"

"Ay," said the painter, with an energy unusual to his quiet manner, and slightly wandering in his answer from Clarence's remark. "Ay, one serves not two mistresses—mine is the glory of my art. Oh! what are the cold shapes of this tame earth, where the footsteps of the gods have vanished, and left no trace, the blemished forms, the debased brows, and the jarring features, to the glorious and gorgeous images which I can conjure up at my will? Away with human beauties, to him whose nights are haunted with the forms of angels and wanderers from the stars, the spirits of all things lovely and exalted in the universe:—the universe as it *was*—when to fountain, and stream, and hill, and to every tree which the summer clothed, was allotted the vigil of a Nymph!—when through glade, and by waterfall, at glossy noon-tide, or under the silver stars, the forms of Godhead and Spirit were seen to walk; when the sculptor modelled his mighty work from the beauty and strength of Heaven, and the poet lay in the shade to dream of the Naiad and the Faun, and the Olympian dwellers whom he waked in rapture to behold; and the painter, not as now, shaping from shadow and in solitude the dim glories of his heart, caught at once his inspiration from the glow of earth and its living wanderers, and, lo, the canvas breathed! Oh! what are the dull realities and the abortive offspring of this altered and humbled world—the world of meaner and dwarfish men—to him whose realms are peopled with visions like these?"

And the artist, whose ardor, long excited, and pent within, had at last thus audibly, and to Clarence's astonishment, burst forth, paused, as if to recall himself from his wandering enthusiasm. Such moments of excitement were, indeed, rare with him, except when utterly alone, and even then, were almost invariably followed by that depression of spirit by which all over-wrought susceptibility is succeeded. A change came over his face, like that of a cloud, when the sunbeam, which gilded, leaves it, and, with a slight sigh, and a subdued tone, he resumed:

"So, my friend, you see what our art can do even for the humblest professor, when I, a poor, friendless, patronless artist, can thus indulge myself by forgetting the present. But I have not yet explained to you the attitude of my principal figure;" and Warner proceeded once more to detail the particulars of his intended picture. It must be confessed that he had chosen a fine, though an arduous, subject: it was the Trial of Charles the First; and as the painter, with the enthusiasm of his profession and the eloquence peculiar to himself, dwelt upon the various expressions of the various forms which that extraordinary judgment court afforded, no wonder that Clarence forgot, with the artist himself, the disadvantages Warner had to encounter, in the inexperi-

ence of an unregulated taste, and an imperfect professional education.

CHAPTER XIV.

All manners take a tincture from our own,
Or come discolored through our passions shown.
—POPE.

What! give up liberty, property, and, as the Gazetteer says, lie down to be saddled with wooden shoes? —*Vicar of Wakefield.*

THERE was something in the melancholy and reflective character of Warner resembling that of Mordaunt; had they lived in these days, perhaps both the artist and the philosopher had been poets. But (with regard to the latter) at that time poetry was not the customary vent for deep thought, or passionate feeling. Gray, it is true, though unjustly condemned as artificial and meretricious in his style, had infused into the scanty works which he has bequeathed to immortality a pathos and a richness foreign to the literature of the age; and, subsequently, Goldsmith, in the affecting, yet somewhat enervate simplicity of his verse, had obtained for Poetry a brief respite from a school at once declamatory and powerless, and led her forth for a "Sunshine Holiday," into the village green, and under the hawthorn shade. But, though the softer and meeker feelings had struggled into a partial and occasional vent, those which partook more of passion and of thought, the deep, the wild, the fervid, were still without "the music of a voice." For the after century it was reserved to restore what we may be permitted to call the spirit of our national literature; to forsake the *clinquant* of the French mimickers of classic gold; to exchange a thrice-adulterated Hippocrene for the pure well of Shakspeare and of nature; to clothe philosophy in the gorgeous and solemn majesty of appropriate music; and to invest passion with a language as burning as its thought, and rapid as its impulse. At that time reflection found its natural channel in metaphysical inquiry, or political speculation; both valuable, perhaps, but neither profound. It was a bold, and a free, and an inquisitive age, but not one in which thought ran over its set and stationary banks, and watered even the common flowers of verse: not one in which Lucretius could have embodied the dreams of Epicurus; Shakspeare lavished the mines of a superhuman wisdom upon his fairy palaces and enchanted isles; or the beautifier* of this common earth have called forth—

The motion of the spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought;

or Disappointment and Satiety have hallowed their human griefs by a pathos wrought from whatever is magnificent, and grand, and lovely in the unknown universe; or the speculations of a great, but visionary,† mind have raised, upon subtlety and doubt, a vast and irregular pile of verse, full of dim-lighted cells, and winding galleries, in which what treasures lie concealed! That was an age in which poetry took one path, and contemplation another; those who were addicted to the latter pursued it in its orthodox roads; and many, whom Nature, perhaps, intended for poets, the wizard Custom converted into speculators or critics.

It was this which gave to Algernon's studies their peculiar hue; while, on the other hand, the taste for the fine arts which then universally prevailed, directed to the creations of painting, rather than those of poetry, more really congenial to his powers, the intense imagination and passion for glory which marked and pervaded the character of the artist.

But as we have seen that that passion for glory made the great characteristic difference between Clarence and Warner, so also did that passion terminate any resemblance which Warner bore to Algernon Mordaunt. With the former, a rank and unwholesome plant, it grew up to the exclusion of all else: with the latter, subdued and regulated, it *sheltered*, not *withered*, the virtues by which it was surrounded. With Warner, ambition was a passionate desire to separate himself by fame, from the herd of other men; with Mordaunt, to bind himself by charity yet closer to his kind: with the one it produced a disgust to his species; with the other, a pity and a love: with the one, power was the badge of distinction; with the other, the means to bless! But our story lingers.

It was now the custom of Warner to spend the whole day at his work, and wander out with Clarence, when the evening darkened, to snatch a brief respite of exercise and air.

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* Wordsworth. † Shelley.

Often, along the lighted and populous streets, would the two young and unfriended competitors for this world's high places, roam with the various crowd, moralizing as they went, or holding dim conjecture upon their destinies to be. And often would they linger beneath the portico of some house where, "haunted with great resort," Pleasure and Pomp held their nightly revels, to listen to the music that, through the open windows, stole over the rare exotics with which wealth mimics the southern scents, and floated, mellowing by distance, along the unworthy streets, and while they stood together, silent, and each feeding upon separate thoughts, the artist's pale lip would curl with scorn, as he heard the laugh and the sounds of a frivolous and hollow mirth ring from the crowd within, and startle the air from the silver spell which music had laid upon it. "These," would he say to Clarence, "these are the dupes of the same fever as ourselves: like us, they strive, and toil, and vex their little lives for a distinction from their race. Ambition comes to them, as to all; but they throw for a different prize than we do; theirs is the honor of a day, ours is immortality; yet they take the same labor, and are consumed by the same care. And, fools that they are, with their gilded names and their gaudy trappings, they would shrink in disdain from that comparison with us which we, with a juster fastidiousness, blush at this moment to acknowledge.

From these scenes they would rove on, and, both delighting in contrast, enter some squalid and obscure quarter of the city. There, one night, quiet observers of their kind, they paused beside a group congregated together by some common cause of obscene merriment or unholy fellowship—a group on which low vice had set her sordid and hideous stamp—to gaze and draw strange humors or a motley moral from that depth and ferment of human nature, into whose sink the thousand streams of civilization had poured their dregs and offal.

"You survey these," said the painter, marking each with the curious eye of his profession: "they are a base horde, it is true; but they have their thirst of fame, their aspirations even in the abyss of crime, or the loathsomeness of famished want. Down in yon cellar, where a farthing rushlight glimmers upon haggard cheeks, distorted with the idiocy of drink—there, in that foul attic, from whose casement you see the beggar's rags hang to dry, or rather to crumble in the reeking and filthy air—farther on, within those walls which, black and heavy as the hearts they hide, close our miserable prospect,—there, even there, in the mildewed dungeon, in the felon's cell, on the very scaffold itself—Ambition hugs her own hope, or scowls upon her own despair. Yes! the inmates of those walls had their perilous game of honor, their 'hazard of the die,' in which vice was triumph and infamy success. We do but share their passion, though we direct it to a better object."

Pausing for a moment, as his thoughts flowed into a somewhat different channel of his character, Warner continued—"We have now caught a glimpse of the two great divisions of mankind; they who riot in palaces, and they who make mirth hideous in rags and hovels: own that it is but a poor survey in either. Can we be contemptible with these, or loathsome with those? Or rather have we not a nobler spark within us, which we have but to fan into a flame, that shall burn for ever, when these miserable meteors sink into the corruption from which they rise?"

"But," observed Clarence, "these are the two extremes; the pinnacle of civilization too worn and bare for any more noble and vigorous fruit, and the base upon which the cloud descends in rain and storm. Look to the central portion of society; there the soil is more genial, and its produce more rich."

"Is it so, in truth?" answered Warner; "pardon me, I believe not: the middling classes are as human as the rest. There is the region,—the heart—of Avarice,—systematized, spreading, rotting, the very fungus and leprosy of social states—suspicion, craft, hypocrisy, servility to the great, oppression to the low, the wax-like mimicry of courtly vices, the hardness of flint to humble woes;—thought, feeling, the faculties and impulses of man, all ulcered into one great canker—Gain;—these make the general character of the middling class, the unleavened mass of that mediocrity which it has been the wisdom of the shallow to applaud. Pah! *we* too are of this class, this potter's earth, this paltry mixture of mud and stone; but *we*, my friend, we will knead gold into our clay."

"But look," said Clarence, pointing to the

group before them; "look, yon wretched mother, whose voice an instant ago uttered the coarsest accents of maudlin and intoxicated prostitution, is now fostering her infant, with a fondness stamped upon her worn cheek and hollow eye, which might shame the nice maternity of nobles;—and there too, yon wretch whom, in the reckless effrontery of hardened abandonment, we ourselves heard a few minutes since boast of his dexterity in theft, and openly exhibit its token—look, he is now, with a Samaritan's own charity, giving the very goods for which his miserable life was risked, to that attenuated and starving stripling! No, Warner, no! even this mass is *not* unleavened. The vilest infamy is not too deep for the Seraph Virtue to descend and illumine its abyss!"

"Out on the weak fools!" said the artist, bitterly: "it would be something, if they could be consistent even in crime!" and, placing his arm in Linden's, he drew him away.

As the picture grew beneath the painter's hand, Clarence was much struck with the outline and expression of countenance given to the regicide Bradshaw.

"They are but an imperfect copy of the living original from whom I have borrowed them," said Warner, in answer to Clarence's remark upon the sternness of the features. "But that original—a relation of mine, is coming here to-day—you shall see him."

While Warner was yet speaking, the person in question entered. His were, indeed, the form and face worthy to be seized by the painter. The peculiarity of his character made him affect a plainness of dress unusual to the day, and approaching to the simplicity, but not the neatness, of Quakerism. His hair,—then, with all the better ranks, a principal object of cultivation,—was wild, dishevelled, and, in wiry flakes of the sablest hue, rose abruptly from a forehead on which either thought or passion had written its annals with an iron pen; the lower part of the brow, which overhung the eye, was singularly sharp and prominent; while the lines, or rather furrows, traced under the eyes and nostrils, spoke somewhat of exhaustion and internal fatigue. But this expression was contrasted and contradicted by the firmly compressed lip; the lighted, steady, stern eye; the resolute and even stubborn front, joined to proportions strikingly athletic, and a stature of uncommon height.

"Well, Wolfe," said the young painter to the person we have described, "it is indeed a kindness to give me a second sitting."

"Tush, boy!" answered Wolfe: "all men have their vain points, and I own that I am not ill pleased that these rugged features should be assigned, even in fancy, to one of the noblest of those men who judged the mightiest cause in which a country was ever plaintiff, a tyrant criminal, and a world witness!"

While Wolfe was yet speaking, his countenance, so naturally harsh, took a yet sterner aspect, and the artist, by a happy touch, succeeded in transferring it to the canvas.

"But after all," continued Wolfe, "it shames me to lend aid to an art frivolous in itself, and almost culpable in times when Freedom wants the head to design, and, perhaps, the hand to execute, far other and nobler works than the blazoning of her past deeds upon perishable canvas."

A momentary anger at the slight put upon his art crossed the pale brow of the artist; but he remembered the character of the man, and continued his work in silence.

"You consider then, sir, that these are times in which liberty is attacked?" said Clarence.

"Attacked!" repeated Wolfe—"attacked!" and then suddenly sinking his voice into a sort of sneer—"why, since the event which this painting is designed to commemorate—I know not if we have ever had one solitary gleam of liberty break along the great chaos of jarring prejudice and barbarous law which we term, forsooth, a glorious constitution. Liberty attacked! no, boy—but it is a time when liberty may be gained."

Perfectly unacquainted with the excited politics of the day, or the growing and mighty spirit which then stirred through the minds of men, Clarence remained silent; but his evident attention flattered the fierce republican, and he proceeded.

"Ay," he said slowly, and as if drinking in a deep and stern joy from his conviction in the truth of the words he uttered—"Ay, I have wandered over the face of the earth, and I have warmed my soul at the fires which lay hidden under its quiet surface; I have been in the city and the desert—the herded and banded crimes of the Old World, and the scattered, but bold, hearts which are found among the savannahs of the New; and in either I have

beheld that seed sown which, from a mustard grain, too scanty for a bird's beak, shall grow up to be a shelter and a home for the whole family of man. I have looked upon the thrones of kings, and lo, the anointed ones were in purple and festive pomp; and I looked *beneath* the thrones, and I saw Want and Hunger, and despairing Wrath gnawing the foundations away. I have stood in the streets of that great city where Mirth seems to hold an eternal jubilee, and beheld the noble riot while the peasant starved; and the priest build altars to Mammon, piled from the earnings of groaning Labor, and cemented with blood and tears. But I looked farther, and saw, in the rear, chains sharpened into swords, misery ripening into justice, and famine darkening into revenge; and I laughed as I beheld, for I knew that the day of the oppressed was at hand."

Somewhat awed by the prophetic tone, though revolted by what seemed to him the novelty, and the fierceness, of the sentiments of the republican, Clarence, after a brief pause, said—

"And what of our own country?"

Wolfe's brow darkened. "The oppression here," said he, "has not been so weighty, therefore the reaction will be less strong; the parties are more blended, therefore their separation will be more arduous; the extortion is less strained, therefore the endurance will be more meek; but, soon or late, the struggle must come: bloody will it be, if the strife be even; gentle and lasting, if the people predominate."

"And if the rulers be the strongest?" said Clarence.

"The struggle will be renewed," replied Wolfe doggedly.

"You still attend those oratorical meetings cousin, I think?" said Warner.

"I do," said Wolfe; "and if you are not so utterly absorbed in your vain and idle art as to be indifferent to all things nobler, you will learn yourself to take interest in what concerns —I will not say your country—but mankind. For you, young man," (and the republican turned to Clarence,) "I would fain hope that life has not already been diverted from the greatest of human objects; if so, come tomorrow night to our assembly, and learn from worthier lips than mine the precepts and the hopes for which good men live or die."

"I will come at all events to listen, if not to learn," said Clarence, eagerly, for his curiosity was excited. And the republican, having now fulfilled the end of his visit, rose and departed.

CHAPTER XV.

> Bound to suffer persecution
> And martyrdom with resolution,
> T' oppose *himself* against the hate
> And vengeance of the incensed state.
>
> —*Hudibras.*

Born of respectable, though not wealthy, parents, John Wolfe was one of those fiery and daring spirits which, previous to some mighty revolution, Fate seems to scatter over various parts of the earth, even those removed from the predestined explosion;—heralds of the events in which they are fitted, though not fated, to be actors. The period at which he is presented to the reader was one considerably prior to that French Revolution so much debated, and so little understood. But some such event, though not foreseen by the common, had been already foreboded by the more enlightened, eye; and Wolfe, from a protracted residence in France, among the most discontented of its freer spirits, had brought hope to that burning enthusiasm which had long made the pervading passion of his existence.

Bold to ferocity, generous in devotion to folly in self-sacrifice, unflinching in his tenets to a degree which rendered their ardor ineffectual to all times, because utterly inapplicable to the present, Wolfe was one of those zealots whose very virtues have the semblance of vice, and whose very capacities for danger become harmless from the rashness of their excess.

It was not among the philosophers and reasoners of France that Wolfe had drawn strength to his opinions: whatever such companions might have done to his tenets, they would at least have moderated his actions. The philosopher may aid, or expedite, a change; but never does the philosopher in any age or of any sect, countenance a crime. But of philosophers Wolfe knew little, and probably despised them for their temperance: it was among fanatics—ignorant, but imaginative—that he had strengthened the love, without

comprehending the nature, of republicanism. Like Lucian's painter, whose flattery portrayed the one-eyed prince in profile, he viewed only that side of the question in which there was no defect, and gave beauty to the whole by concealing the half. Thus, though on his return to England herding with the common class of his reforming brethren, Wolfe possessed many peculiarities and distinctions of character which, in rendering him strikingly adapted to the purpose of the novelist, must serve as a caution to the reader not to judge of the class by the individual.

With a *class* of Republicans in England there was a strong tendency to support their cause by reasoning. With Wolfe, whose mind was little wedded to logic, all was the offspring of turbulent feelings, which, in rejecting argument, substituted declamation for syllogism. This effected a powerful and irreconcilable distinction between Wolfe and the better part of his comrades; for the habits of cool reasoning, whether true or false, are little likely to bias the mind towards those crimes to which Wolfe's irregulated emotions might possibly urge him, and give to the characters, to which they are a sort of common denominator, something of method and much of similarity. But the feelings—those orators which allow no calculation, and baffle the tameness of comparison—rendered Wolfe alone unique, eccentric in opinion or action, whether of vice or virtue.

Private ties frequently moderate the ardor of our public enthusiasm. Wolfe had none. His nearest relation was Warner, and it may readily be supposed that with the pensive and contemplative artist he had very little in common. He had never married, nor had ever seemed to wander from his stern and sterile path, in the most transient pursuit of the pleasures of sense. Inflexibly honest, rigidly austere—in his moral character his bitterest enemies could detect no flaw—poor, even to indigence, he had invariably refused all overtures of the government—thrice imprisoned and heavily fined for his doctrines, no fear of a future, no remembrance of the past, punishment could ever silence his bitter eloquence or moderate the passion of his distempered zeal—kindly, though rude, his scanty means were ever shared by the less honest and disinterested followers of his faith; and he had been known for days to deprive himself of food, and for nights of shelter, for the purpose of yielding food and shelter to another.

Such was the man doomed to forsake, through a long and wasted life, every substantial blessing, in pursuit of a shadowy good; with the warmest benevolence in his heart, to relinquish private affections, and to brood even to madness over public offences—to sacrifice every thing in a generous, though erring, devotion for that freedom whose cause, instead of promoting, he was calculated to retard; and, while he believed himself the martyr of a high and uncompromising virtue, to close his career with the greatest of human crimes.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Faith, methinks his humor is good, and his purse will buy good company."—*The Parson's Wedding.*

When Clarence returned home, after the conversation recorded in our last chapter, he found a note from Talbot, inviting him to meet some friends of the latter at supper that evening. It was the first time Clarence had been asked, and he looked forward with some curiosity and impatience to the hour appointed in the note.

It is impossible to convey any idea of the jealous rancor felt by Mr. and Mrs. Copperas on hearing of this distinction—a distinction which 'the perfect courtier' had never once bestowed upon themselves.

Mrs. Copperas tossed her head, too indignant for words; and the stock-jobber, in the bitterness of his soul, affirmed, with a meaning air, "that he dared say, after all, that the old gentleman was not so rich as he gave out."

On entering Talbot's drawing-room, Clarence found seven or eight people assmbled: their names, in proclaiming the nature of the party, indicated that the aim of the host was to combine aristocracy and talent. The literary acquirements and worldly tact of Talbot, joined to the adventitious circumstances of birth and fortune, enabled him to effect this object, so desirable in polished society, far better than we generally find it effected now. The conversation of these guests was light and various. The last *bon mot* of Chesterfield, the last sarcasm of Horace Walpole, Goldsmith's

"Traveller," Shenstone's "Pastorals," and the attempt of Mrs. Montagu to bring Shakspeare into fashion—in all these subjects the graceful wit and exquisite taste of Talbot shone pre-eminent; and he had almost succeeded in convincing a profound critic that Gray was a poet more likely to live than Mason, when the servant announced supper.

That was the age of suppers! Happy age! Meal of ease and mirth; when Wine and Night lit the lamp of Wit! O, what precious things were said and looked at those banquets of the soul! There epicurism was in the lip as well as the palate, and one had humor for a *hors d'œuvre*, and repartee for an *entremet*. In dinner there is something too pompous, too formal, for the true ease of Table Talk. One's intellectual appetite, like the physical, is coarse but dull. At dinner one is fit only for eating; *after* dinner only for politics. But supper was a glorious relic of the ancients. The bustle of the day had thoroughly wound up the spirit, and every stroke upon the dial-plate of wit was true to the genius of the hour. The wallet of diurnal ancedote was full, and craved unloading. The great meal—that vulgar first love of the appetite—was over, and one now only flattered it into coquetting with another. The mind, disengaged and free, was no longer absorbed in a cutlet or burthened with a joint. The *gourmand* carried the nicety of his physical perception to his moral, and applauded a *bon mot* instead of a *bonne bouche*.

Then too one had no necessity to keep a reserve of thought for the after evening; supper was the final consummation, the glorious funeral pyre of day. One could be merry till bedtime without an interregnum. Nay, if in the ardor of convivialism one did—I merely hint at the possibility of such an event—if one *did* exceed the narrow limits of strict ebriety, and open the heart with a ruby key, one had nothing to dread from the cold, or, what is worse, the warm looks of ladies in the drawing-room; no fear that an imprudent word, in the amatory fondness of the fermented blood, might expose one to matrimony and settlements. There was no tame, trite medium of propriety and suppressed confidence, no bridge from board to bed, over which a false step (and your wine cup is a marvellous corrupter of ambulatory rectitude) might precipitate into an irrecoverable abyss of perilous communication or unwholesome truth. One's pillow became at once the legitimate and natural bourn to "the overheated brain;" and the generous rashness of the cœnatorial reveller was not damped by untimeous caution or ignoble calculation.

But "we have changed all that now:" Sobriety has become the successor of suppers; the great ocean of moral encroachment has not left us one little island of refuge. Miserable supper-lovers that we are, like the native Indians of America, a scattered and daily disappearing race, we wander among strange customs, and behold the innovating and invading Dinner spread gradually over the very space of time in which the majesty of Supper once reigned undisputed and supreme!

> O, ye heavens, be kind,
> And feel, thou earth, for this afflicted race.
>
> WORDSWORTH.

As he was sitting down to the table, Clarence's notice was arrested by a somewhat suspicious and unpleasing occurrence. The supper room was on the ground floor, and, owing to the heat of the weather, one of the windows, facing the small garden, was left open. Through this window Clarence distinctly saw the face of a man look into the room for one instant, with a prying and curious gaze, and then as instantly disappear. As no one else seemed to remark this incident, and the general attention was somewhat noisily engrossed by the subject of conversation, Clarence thought it not worth while to mention a circumstance for which the impertinence of any neighboring servant, or drunken passer-by, might easily account. An apprehension, however, of a more unpleasant nature shot across him, as his eye fell upon the costly plate which Talbot rather ostentatiously displayed, and then glanced to the single and aged servant, who was, besides his master, the only male inmate of the house. Nor could he help saying to Talbot, in the course of the evening, that he wondered he was not afraid of hoarding so many articles of value in a house at once lonely and ill guarded.

"Ill guarded!" said Talbot, rather affronted, why, I and my servant always sleep here!"

To this Clarence thought it neither prudent nor well-bred to offer further remark.

CHAPTER XVII.

Meetings, or public calls, he never miss'd,
To dictate often, always to assist.
* * * *
To his experience and his native sense,
He joined a bold, imperious, eloquence:
The grave, stern look of men inform'd and wise,
A full command of feature, heart and eyes,
An awe-compelling frown, and fear-inspiring size.
—CRABBE.

THE next evening Clarence, mindful of Wolfe's invitation, inquired from Warner (who repaid the contempt of the republican for the painter's calling by a similar feeling for the zealot's) the direction of the oratorical meeting, and repaired there alone. It was the most celebrated club (of that description) of the day, and well worth attending, as a gratification to the curiosity, if not an improvement to the mind.

On entering, he found himself in a long room, tolerably well lighted, and still better filled. The sleepy countenances of the audience, the whispered conversation carried on at scattered intervals, the listless attitudes of some, the frequent yawns of others, the eagerness with which attention was attracted to the opening door, when it admitted some new object of interest, the desperate resolution with which some of the more energetic turned themselves towards the orator, and then, with a faint shake of the head, turned themselves again hopelessly away—were all signs that denoted that no very eloquent declaimer was in possession of the "house." It was, indeed, a singularly dull, monotonous voice which, arising from the upper end of the room, dragged itself on towards the middle, and expired with a sighing sound before it reached the end. The face of the speaker suited his vocal powers; it was small, mean, and of a round stupidity, without anything even in fault that could possibly command attention, or even the excitement of disapprobation: the very garments of the orator seemed dull and heavy, and, like the Melancholy of Milton, had a "leaden look." Now and then some words, more emphatic than others—stones breaking, as it were, with a momentary splash, the stagnation of the heavy stream—produced from three very quiet, unhappy-looking persons, seated next to the speaker, his immediate friends, three single isolated "hears!"

The force of friendship could no farther go.

At last, the orator having *spoken through*, suddenly stopped; the whole meeting seemed as if a weight had been taken from it; there was a general buzz of awakened energy, each stretched his limbs, and resettled himself in his place,

And turning to his neighbor, said, "Rejoice!"

A pause ensued—the chairman looked round—the eyes of the meeting followed those of their president, with an universal and palpable impatience, towards an obscure corner of the room: the pause deepened for one moment, and then was broken; a voice cried "Wolfe!" and at that signal the whole room shook with the name. The place which Clarence had taken did not allow him to see the object of these cries, till he rose from his situation, and, passing two rows of benches, stood forth in the middle space of the room; then, from one to one, went round the general roar of applause; feet stamped, hands clapped, umbrellas set their sharp points to the ground, and walking-sticks thumped themselves out of shape in the universal clamor. Tall, gaunt, and erect, the speaker possessed, even in the mere proportions of his frame, that physical power which never fails, in a popular assembly, to gain attention to mediocrity, and to throw dignity over faults. He looked very slowly round the room, remaining perfectly still and motionless, till the clamor of applause had entirely subsided, and every ear, Clarence's no less eagerly than the rest, was strained, and thirsting to catch the first syllables of his voice.

It was then with a low, very deep, and somewhat hoarse tone, that he began; and it was not till he had spoken for several minutes that the iron expression of his face altered, that the drooping hand was raised, and that the suppressed, yet powerful, voice began to expand and vary in its volume. He had then entered upon a new department of his subject. The question was connected with the English constitution, and Wolfe was now preparing to put forth, in long and blackened array, the alleged evils of an aristocratical form of government. *Then* it was as if the bile and bitterness of years were poured forth in a terrible and stormy wrath—then his action became vehement, and his eye flashed forth unutterable fire: his voice, solemn, swelling and increasing with each tone in its height and depth, filled, as with something

palpable and perceptible, the shaking walls. The listeners — a various and unconnected group, bound by no tie of faith or of party, many attracted by curiosity, many by the hope of ridicule, some abhorring the tenets expressed, and nearly all disapproving their principles, or doubting their wisdom—the listeners, certainly not a group previously formed or moulded into enthusiasm, became rapt and earnest, their very breath forsook them.

Linden had never before that night heard a public speaker; but he was of a thoughtful and rather calculating mind, and his early habits of decision, and the premature cultivation of his intellect, rendered him little susceptible, in general, to the impressions of the vulgar: nevertheless, in spite of himself, he was hurried away by the stream, and found that the force and rapidity of the speaker did not allow him even time for the dissent and disapprobation which his republican maxims and fiery denunciations perpetually excited in a mind aristocratic both by creed and education. At length, after a peroration of impetuous and magnificent invective, the orator ceased.

In the midst of the applause that followed, Clarence left the assembly; he could not endure the thought that any duller or more common-place speaker should fritter away the spell which yet bound and engrossed his spirit.

CHAPTER XVIII.

At the bottom of the staircase was a small door, which gave way before Nigel, as he precipitated himself upon the scene of action, a cocked pistol in one hand, etc.—*Fortunes of Nigel.*

The night, though not utterly dark, was rendered capricious and dim by alternate wind and rain; and Clarence was delayed in his return homeward by seeking occasional shelter from the rapid and heavy showers which hurried by. It was during one of the temporary cessations of the rain that he reached Copperas Bower, and while he was searching in his pockets for the key which was to admit him, he observed two men loitering about his neighbor's house. The light was not sufficient to give him more than a scattered and imperfect view of their motions. Somewhat alarmed, he stood for several moments at the door, watching them as well as he was able; nor did he enter the house till the loiterers had left their suspicious position, and, walking onwards, were hid entirely from him by the distance and darkness.

"It really is a dangerous thing for Talbot," thought Clarance, as he ascended to his apartment, "to keep so many valuables, and only one servant, and that one as old as himself too. However, as I am by no means sleepy, and my room is by no means cool, I may as well open my window, and see if those idle fellows make their re-appearance." Suiting the action to the thought, Clarence opened his little casement, and leant wistfully out.

He had no light in his room, for none was ever left for him. This circumstance, however, of course enabled him the better to penetrate the dimness and haze of the night, and, by the help of the fluttering lamps, he was enabled to take a general, though not minute, survey of the scene below.

I think I have before said that there was a garden between Talbot's house and Copperas Bower; this was bounded by a wall, which confined Talbot's peculiar territory of garden, and this wall, describing a parallelogram, faced also the road. It contained two entrances—one the principal adytus, in the shape of a comely iron gate, the other a wooden door, which, being a private pass, fronted the intermediate garden before mentioned, and was exactly opposite to Clarence's window.

Linden had been more than ten minutes at his post, and had just begun to think his suspicions without foundation, and his vigil in vain, when he observed the same figures he had seen before advance slowly from the distance, and pause by the front gate of Talbot's mansion.

Alarmed and anxious, he redoubled his attention; he stretched himself as far as his safety would permit, out of the window; the lamps, agitated by the wind, which swept by in occasional gusts, refused to grant to his straining sight more than an inaccurate and unsatisfying survey. Presently a blast, more violent than ordinary, suspended as it were the falling columns of rain, and left Clarence in almost total darkness; it rolled away, and the momentary calm which ensued enabled him to see that one of the men was stooping by the gate, and the

other standing apparently on the watch at a little distance. Another gust shook the lamps, and again obscured his view: and when it had passed onward in its rapid course, the men had left the gate, and were in the garden beneath his window. They crept cautiously, but swiftly, along the opposite wall, till they came to the small door we have before mentioned; here they halted, and one of them appeared to occupy himself in opening the door. Now then, fear was changed into certainty, and it seemed without doubt, that the men, having found some difficulty or danger in forcing the stronger or more public entrance, had changed their quarter of attack. No more time was to be lost; Clarence shouted aloud, but the high wind probably prevented the sound reaching the ears of the burglars, or at least rendered it dubious and confused. The next moment, and before Clarence could repeat his alarm, they had opened the door, and were within the neighboring garden, beyond his view. Very young men, unless their experience has outstripped their youth, seldom have much presence of mind; that quality, which is the opposite to *surprise*, comes to us in those years when nothing seems to us strange or unexpected. But a much older man than Clarence might have well been at a loss to know what conduct to adopt in the situation in which our hero was placed. The visits of the watchman to that (then) obscure and ill-inhabited neighborhood, were more regulated by his indolence than his duty, and Clarence knew that it would be in vain to listen for his cry, or tarry for his assistance. He himself was utterly unarmed, but the stock-jobber had a pair of horse pistols, and, as this recollection flashed upon him, the pause of deliberation ceased.

With a swift step he descended the first flight of stairs, and, pausing at the chamber door of the faithful couple, knocked upon its panels with a loud and hasty summons. The second repetition of the noise produced the sentence, uttered in a very trembling voice, of "Who's there?"

"It is I, Clarence Linden," replied our hero; "lose no time in opening the door."

This answer seemed to re-assure the valorous stock-jobber. He slowly undid the bolt, and turned the key.

"In Heaven's name, what do you want, Mr. Linden?" said he.

"Ay," cried a sharp voice from the more internal recesses of the chamber, "what do you want, sir, disturbing us in the bosom of our family, and at the dead of night!"

With a rapid voice, Clarence repeated what he had seen, and requested the broker to accompany him to Talbot's house, or at least to lend him his pistols.

"He shall do no such thing," cried Mrs. Copperas. "Come here, Mr. C., and shut the door directly."

"Stop, my love," said the stock-jobber, "stop a moment."

"For God's sake," cried Clarence, "make no delay; the poor old man may be murdered by this time."

"It's no business of mine," said the stock-jobber.

"If Adolphus had not broken the rattle I would not have minded the trouble of springing it; but you are very much mistaken if you think I am going to leave my warm bed, in order to have my throat cut."

"Then give me your pistols," cried Clarence; "I will go alone."

"I shall commit no such folly," said the stock-jobber; "if you are murdered, I may have to answer it to your friends, and pay for your burial. Besides, you owe us for your lodgings—go to your bed, young man, as I shall to mine." And so saying, Mr. Copperas proceeded to close the door.

But enraged at the brutality of the man, and excited by the urgency of the case, Clarence did not allow him so peaceable a retreat. With a strong and fierce grasp, he seized the astonished Copperas by the throat, and shaking him violently, forced his own entrance into the sacred nuptial chamber.

"By Heaven," cried Linden, in a savage and stern tone, for his blood was up, "I will twist your coward's throat, and save the murderer his labor, if you do not instantly give me up your pistols."

The stock-jobber was panic-stricken. "Take them," he cried in the extremest terror; "there they are on the chimney-piece, close by."

"Are they primed and loaded?" said Linden, not relaxing his gripe.

"Yes, yes!" said the stock-jobber, "loose my throat, or you will choke me!" and, at that instant, Clarence felt himself clasped by the invading hands of Mrs. Copperas.

"Call off your wife," said he, "or I *will* choke you!" and he tightened his hold, "and tell her to give me the pistols."

The next moment Mrs. Copperas extended the debated weapons towards Clarence. He seized them, flung the poor stock-jobber against the bed post, hurried down stairs, opened the back door which led into the garden, flew across the intervening space, arrived at the door, and entering Talbot's garden, paused to consider what was the next step to be taken.

A person equally brave as Clarence, but more cautious, would not have left the house without alarming Mr. de Warens, even in spite of the failure with his master; but Linden only thought of the pressure of time, and the necessity of expedition, and he would have been a very unworthy hero of romance had he felt fear for two antagonists, with a brace of pistols at his command, and a high and good action in view.

After a brief, but decisive, halt, he proceeded rapidly round the house, in order to ascertain at which part tbe ruffians had admitted themselves, should they (as indeed there was little doubt) have already effected their entrance.

He found the shutters of one of the principal rooms on the ground floor had been opened, and through the aperture he caught the glimpse of a moving light, which was suddenly obscured. As he was about to enter, the light again flashed out: he drew back just in time, carefully screened himself behind the shutter, and, through one of the chinks, observed what passed within. Opposite to the window was a door which conducted to the hall and principal staircase; this door was open, and in the hall, at the foot of the stairs, Clarence saw two men; one carried a dark lantern, from which the light proceeded, and some tools, of the nature of which Clarence was naturally ignorant: this was a middle-sized muscular man, dressed in the rudest garb of an ordinary laborer; the other was much taller and younger, and his dress was of rather a less ignoble fashion.

"Hist! hist!" said the taller one, in a low tone, "did you not hear a noise, Ben?"

"Not a pin fall; but stow your whids, man!"

This was all that Clarence heard in a connected form; but as the wretches paused, in evident doubt how to proceed, he caught two or three detached words, which his ingenuity readily formed into sentences. "No, no! sleeps to the left—old man above—plate chest—we must have the blunt too. Come, track up the dancers, and dowse the glim." And at the last words the light was extinguished and Clarence's quick and thirsting ear just caught their first steps on the stairs as they died away—and all was hushed.

It had several times occurred to Clarence to rush from his hiding-place, and fire at the ruffians, and perhaps that measure would have been the wisest he could have taken; but Clarence had never discharged a pistol in his life, and he felt, therefore, that his aim must be uncertain enough to render a favorable position and a short distance essential requisites. Both these were, at present, denied to him; and although he saw no weapons about the persons of the villains, yet he imagined they would not have ventured on so dangerous an expedition without fire-arms; and if he failed, as would have been most probable, in his two shots, he concluded that, though the alarm would be given, his own fate would be inevitable.

If this was reasoning upon false premises, for house-breakers seldom or never carry loaded fire-arms, and never stay for revenge, when their safety demands escape, Clarence may be forgiven for not knowing the customs of house-breakers, and for not making the very best of an extremely novel and dangerous situation.

No sooner did he find himself in total darkness, than he bitterly reproached himself for his late backwardness, and, inwardly resolving not again to miss any opportunity which presented itself, he entered the window, groped along the room into the hall, and found his way very slowly, and after much circumlocution, to the staircase.

He had just gained the summit, when a loud cry broke upon the stillness: it came from a distance, and was instantly hushed; but he caught, at brief intervals, the sound of angry and threatening voices. Clarence bent down anxiously, in the hope that some solitary ray would escape through the crevice of the door within which the robbers were engaged. But though the sounds came from the same floor as that on which he now trod, they seemed

far and remote, and not a gleam of light broke the darkness.

He continued, however, to feel his way in the direction from which the sounds proceeded, and soon found himself in a narrow gallery; the voices seemed more loud and near as he advanced; at last he distinctly heard the words—

"Will you not confess where it is placed?"

"Indeed, indeed," replied an eager and earnest voice, which Clarence recognized as Talbot's, "this is all the money I have in the house—the plate is above—my servant has the key—take it—take all—but save his life and mine."

"None of your gammon," said another and rougher voice than that of the first speaker: "we know you have more blunt than this—a paltry sum of fifty pounds, indeed!"

"Hold!" cried the other ruffian, "here is a picture set with diamonds, that will do, Ben. Let go the old man."

Clarence was now just at hand, and probably from a sudden change in the position of the dark lantern within, a light abruptly broke from beneath the door, and streamed along the passage.

"No, no, no!" cried the old man, in a loud yet tremulous voice—"No, not that, anything else, but I will defend *that* with my life."

"Ben, my lad," said the ruffian, "twist the old fool's neck: we have no more time to lose."

At that very moment the door was flung violently open, and Clarence Linden stood within three paces of the reprobates and their prey. The taller villain had a miniature in his hand, and the old man clung to his legs with a convulsive but impotent clasp! the other fellow had already his gripe upon Talbot's neck, and his right hand grasped a long case-knife.

With a fierce and flashing eye, and a cheek deadly pale with internal and resolute excitement, Clarence confronted the robbers.

"Thank Heaven," cried he, "I am not too late!" And advancing yet another step towards the shorter ruffian, who, struck mute with the suddenness of the apparition, still retained his grasp of the old man, he fired his pistol, with a steady and close aim; the ball penetrated the wretch's brain, and without sound or sigh, he fell down dead, at the very feet of his just destroyer. The remaining robber had already meditated, and a second more sufficed to accomplish, his escape. He sprang towards the door: the ball whizzed beside him, but touched him not. With a safe and swift step, long inured to darkness, he fled along the passage; and Linden, satisfied with the vengeance he had taken upon his comrade, did not harass him with an unavailing pursuit.

Clarence turned to assist Talbot. The old man was stretched upon the floor insensible, but his hand grasped the miniature which the plunderer had dropped in his flight and terror, and his white and ashen lip was pressed convulsively upon the recovered treasure.

Linden raised and placed him on his bed, and while employed in attempting to revive him, the ancient domestic, alarmed by the report of the pistol, came, poker in hand, to his assistance.

By little and little they recovered the object of their attention.

His eyes rolled wildly round the room, and he muttered—

"Off, off! ye shall not rob me of my only relic of her—where is it?—have you got it!—the picture, the picture?"

"It is here, sir, it is here," said the old servant, "it is in your own hand."

Talbot's eye fell upon it; he gazed at it for some moments, pressed it to his lips, and then, sitting erect, and looking wildly round, he seemed to awaken to the sense of his late danger and his present deliverance.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ah, fleeter far than fleetest storm or steed,
  Or the death they bear,
The heart which tender thought clothes like a dove,
  With the wings of care!
In the battle—in the darkness—in the need,
  Shall mine cling to thee!
Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love,
  It may bring to thee!—SHELLEY.

LETTER FROM ALGERNON MORDAUNT TO ISABEL ST. LEGER.

"YOU told me not to write to you. You know how long, but not how uselessly I have obeyed you. Did you think, Isabel, that my love was of that worldly and common order which requires a perpetual aliment to support it? Did you think that, if you forbade the stream to flow visibly, its sources would be exhausted, and its channel dried up? This may be the passion of

others; it is not mine. Months have passed since we parted, and since then you have not seen me: this letter is the first token you have received from a remembrance which cannot die. But do you think that I have not watched, and tended upon you, and gladdened my eyes with gazing on your beauty, when you have not dreamed that I was by? Ah, Isabel, your heart should have told you of it—*mine* would, had *you* been so near me!

"You receive no letters from me, it is true—think you that my hand and heart are therefore idle? No. I write to you a thousand burning lines: I pour out my soul to you: I tell you of all I suffer: my thoughts, my actions, my very dreams, are all traced upon the paper. I send them not to you, but I read them over and over, and when I come to your name, I pause, and shut my eyes, and then 'Fancy has her power,' and lo! 'you are by my side!'

"Isabel, our love has not been a holiday and joyous sentiment; but I feel a solemn and unalterable conviction that our union is ordained.

"Others have many objects to distract and occupy the thoughts which are once forbidden a single direction, but we have *none*. At least, to me you are everything. Pleasure, splendor, ambition, all are merged into one great and eternal thought, and that is *you!*

"Others have told me, and I believed them, that I was hard, and cold, and stern—so perhaps I was before I knew you, but now I am weaker and softer than a child. There is a stone which is of all the hardest and the chillest, but when once set on fire it is unquenchable. You smile at my image, perhaps, and I should smile if I saw it in the writing of another; for all that I have ridiculed in romance, as exaggerated, seems now to me too cool and too commonplace for reality.

"But this is not what I meant to write to you; you are ill, dearest and noblest Isabel, you are ill! I am the cause, and you conceal it from me; and you would rather pine away and die than suffer *me* to lose one of those worldly advantages which are in *my* eyes but as dust in the balance,—it is in vain to deny it. I heard from others of your impaired health; I have witnessed it myself. Do you remember last night, when you were in the room with your relations, and they made you sing—a song too which you used to sing to me, and when you came to the second stanza your voice failed you, and you burst into tears, and *they*, instead of soothing, reproached and chid you, and you answered not, but wept on? Isabel, do you remember that a sound was heard at the window, and a groan? Even they were startled, but they thought it was the wind; for the night was dark and stormy, and they saw not that it was *I*—yes, my devoted, my generous love, it was I who gazed upon you, and from whose heart that voice of anguish was wrung; and I saw your cheek was pale and thin, and that the canker at the core had preyed upon the blossom.

"Think you, after this, that I could keep silence or obey your request? No, dearest, no! Is not my happiness your object? I have the vanity to believe so; and am *I* not the best judge how that happiness is to be secured? I tell you, I say it calmly, coldly, dispassionately—not from the imagination, not even from the heart, but solely from the *reason*—that I can bear every thing rather than the loss of *you;* and that if the evil of my love scathe and destroy you, I shall consider and curse myself as your murderer! Save me from this extreme of misery, my—yes, *my* Isabel! I shall be at the copse where we have so often met before, to-morrow, at noon. You will meet me; and if I cannot *convince* you, I will not ask you to be *persuaded.*

"A. M."

And Isabel read this letter, and placed it at her heart, and felt less miserable than she had done for months; for, though she wept, there was sweetness in the tears which the assurance of *his* love, and the tenderness of his remonstrance, had called forth. She met him—how could she refuse? and the struggle was past. Though not "convinced" she *was* "persuaded;" for her heart, which refused his reasonings, melted at his reproaches and his grief. But she would not consent to unite her fate with him at once, for the evils of that step to his interests were immediate and near; she was only persuaded to permit their correspondence and occasional meetings, in which, however imprudent they might be for herself, the disadvantages to her lover were distant and remote. It was of him only that she thought: for him she trembled; for him she was the coward and the woman: for herself she had no fears, and no forethought.

And Algernon was worthy of this devoted love, and returned it as it was given. Man's love, in general, is a selfish and exacting sentiment: it demands every sacrifice, and refuses all. But the nature of Mordaunt was essentially high and disinterested, and his honor, like his love, was not that of the world: it was the ethereal and spotless honor of a lofty and generous mind, the honor which custom can neither give nor take away; and, however impatiently he bore the deferring of an union, in which he deemed that *he* was the only sufferer, he would not have uttered a sigh or urged a prayer for that union, could it, in the minutest or remotest degree, have injured or degraded *her*.

These are the hearts and natures which make life beautiful: these are the shrines which sanctify love: these are the diviner spirits for whom there is kindred and commune with every thing exalted and holy in heaven and earth. For them Nature unfolds her hoarded poetry, and her hidden spells: for their steps are the lonely mountains, and the still woods have a murmur for their ears: for them there is strange music in the wave, and in the whispers of the light leaves, and rapture in the voices of the birds: their souls drink, and are saturated with the mysteries of the

Universal Spirit, which the philosophy of old times believed to be God himself. They look upon the sky with a gifted vision, and its dove-like quiet descends and overshadows their hearts: the Moon and the Night are to them wells of Castalian inspiration and golden dreams; and it was one of *them*, who, gazing upon the Evening Star, felt in the inmost sanctuary of his soul, its mysterious harmonies with his most worshipped hope, his most passionate desire, and dedicated it to—LOVE.

CHAPTER XX.

Maria. Here's the brave old man's love.
Bianca. That loves the young man.
—*The Woman's Prize; or, the Tamer Tamed.*

"No, my dear Clarence, you have placed confidence in me, and it is now my duty to return it; you have told me your history and origin, and I will inform you of mine, but not yet. At present we will talk of you. You have conferred upon me what our universal love of life makes us regard as the greatest of human obligations; and though I can bear a large burden of gratitude, yet I must throw off an atom or two, in using my little power in *your* behalf. Nor is this all: your history has also given you another tie upon my heart, and in granting you a *legitimate* title to my good offices, removes any scruple you might otherwise have had in accepting them.

"I have just received this letter from Lord ——, the minister for foreign affairs: you will see that he has appointed you to the office of *attaché* at ——. You will also oblige me by looking over this other letter at your earliest convenience; the trifling sum which it contains will be repeated every quarter: it will do very well for an *attaché:* when you are an ambassador, why, we must equip you by a mortgage on Scarsdale; and now, my dear Clarence, tell me all about the Copperases."

I need not say who was the speaker of the above sentences: sentences, apparently of a very agreeable nature; nevertheless, Clarence seemed to think otherwise, for the tears gushed into his eyes, and he was unable for several moments to reply.

"Come, my young friend," said Talbot, kindly; "I have no near relations among whom I can choose a son I like better than you, nor you any at present from whom you might select a more desirable father; consequently, you must let me look upon you as my own flesh and blood; and, as I intend to be a very strict and peremptory father, I expect the most silent and scrupulous obedience to my commands. My first parental order to you is to put up those papers, and to say nothing more about them; for I have a great deal to talk to you about upon other subjects."

And by these and similar kind-hearted and delicate remonstrances, the old man gained his point. From that moment Clarence looked upon him with the grateful and venerating love of a son; and I question very much, if Talbot had really been the father of our hero, whether he would have liked so handsome a successor half so well.

The day after this arrangement, Clarence paid his debt to the Copperases, and removed to Talbot's house. With this event commenced a new era in his existence: he was no longer an outcast and a wanderer: out of alien ties he had wrought the link of a close and even paternal friendship: life, brilliant in its prospects, and elevated in its ascent, opened flatteringly before him; and the fortune and courage, which had so well provided for the present, were the best omens and auguries for the future.

One evening, when the opening autumn had made its approaches felt, and Linden and his new parent were seated alone by a blazing fire, and had come to a full pause in their conversation, Talbot, shading his face with the friendly pages of the "Whitehall Evening Paper," as if to protect it from the heat, said—

"I told you, the other day, that I would give you, at some early opportunity, a brief sketch of my life. This confidence is due to you in return for yours; and since you will soon leave me, and I am an old man, whose life no prudent calculation can fix, I may as well choose the present time to favor you with my confessions."

Clarence expressed and looked at his interest, and the old man thus commenced—

THE HISTORY OF A VAIN MAN.

"I was the favorite of my parents, for I was quick at my lessons, and my father said I inherited my genius from him; and comely in my person, and my mother said that my good

looks came from her. So the honest pair saw in their eldest son the union of their own attractions, and thought they were making much of themselves when they lavished their caresses upon me. They had another son, poor Arthur—I think I see him now! He was a shy, quiet, subdued boy, of a very plain personal appearance. My father and mother were vain, showy, ambitious people of the world, and they were as ashamed of my brother as they were proud of myself. However, he afterwards entered the army, and distinguished himself highly. He died in battle, leaving an only daughter, who married, *as you know*, a nobleman of high rank. Her subsequent fate it is now needless to relate.

"Petted and pampered from my childhood, I grew up with a profound belief in my own excellences, and a feverish and irritating desire to impress every one who came in my way with the same idea. There is a sentence in Sir William Temple, which I have often thought of with a painful conviction of its truth: 'A restlessness in men's minds to be something they are not, and to have something they have not, is the root of all immorality.' * At school, I was confessedly the cleverest boy in my remove; and, what I valued equally as much, I was the best cricketer of the best eleven. Here, then, you will say my vanity was satisfied—no such thing! There was a boy who shared my room, and was next me in the school: we were, therefore, always thrown together. He was a great, stupid, lubberly cub, equally ridiculed by the masters, and disliked by the boys: will you believe that this individual was the express and almost sole object of my envy? He was more than my rival, he was my superior; and I hated him with all the unleavened bitterness of my soul.

"I have said he was my superior—it was in one thing. He could balance a stick, nay, a cricket-bat, a poker, upon his chin, and I could not; you laugh, and so can I now, but it was no subject of laughter to me then. This circumstance, trifling as it may appear to you, poisoned my enjoyment. The boy saw my envy, for I could not conceal it; and as all fools are malicious, and most fools ostentatious, he took a particular pride and pleasure in displaying his dexterity, and 'showing off' my discontent. You can form no idea of the extent to which this petty insolence vexed and disquieted me. Even in my sleep, the clumsy and grinning features of this tormenting imp haunted me like a spectre; my visions were nothing but chins and cricket-bats;—walking sticks, sustaining themselves upon human excrescences, and pokers dancing a hornpipe upon the tip of a nose. I assure you that I have spent hours in secret seclusion, practising to rival my hated comrade, and my face—see how one vanity quarrels with another—was little better than a map of bruises and discolorations.

"I actually became so uncomfortable as to write home, and request to leave the school. I was then about sixteen, and my indulgent father, in granting my desire, told me that I was too old and too advanced in my learning to go to any other academic establishment than the University. The day before I left the school, I gave, as was usually the custom, a breakfast to all my friends; the circumstance of my tormentor's sharing my room obliged me to invite him among the rest. However, I was in high spirits, and being an universal favorite with my schoolfellows, I succeeded in what was always to me an object of social ambition, and set the table on a roar; yet, when our festival was nearly expired, and I began to allude more particularly to my approaching departure, my vanity was far more gratified, for my feelings were far more touched, by observing the regret, and receiving the good wishes, of all my companions. I still recall that hour as one of the proudest and happiest of my life: but it had its immediate reverse. My evil demon put it into my tormentor's head to give me one last parting pang of jealousy. A large umbrella happened accidentally to be in my room: Crompton—such was my schoolfellow's name—saw and seized it; 'Look, Talbot,' said he, with his taunting and hideous sneer, 'you can't do this;' and placing the point of the umbrella upon his forehead, just above the eyebrow, he performed various antics round the room.

"At that moment I was standing by the fire-place, and conversing with two boys upon whom, above all others, I wished to leave a favorable impression. My foolish soreness on this one subject had been often remarked, and as I turned, in abrupt and awkward discomposure, from the exhibition, I observed my two

* And of all good.—*Author.*

schoolfellows smile and exchange looks. I am not naturally passionate, and even at that age I had, in ordinary cases, great self-command; but this observation, and the cause which led to it, threw me off my guard. Whenever we are utterly under the command of one feeling, we cannot be said to have our reason: at that instant I literally believe I was beside myself. What! in the very flush of the last triumph that that scene would ever afford me; amidst the last regrets of my early friends, to whom I fondly hoped to bequeath a long and brilliant remembrance, to be thus bearded by a contemptible rival, and triumphed over by a pitiful, yet insulting, superioity; to close my condolences with laughter; to have the final solemnity of my career thus terminating in mockery; and ridicule substituted as an ultimate reminiscence in the place of an admiring regret; all this, too, to be effected by one so long hated, one whom I was the only being forbidden the comparative happiness of despising? I could not brook it; the insult—the insulter were too revolting. As the unhappy buffoon approached me, thrusting his distorted face towards mine, I seized and pushed him aside, with a brief curse and a violent hand. The sharp point of the umbrella slipped; my action gave it impetus and weight; it penetrated his eye, and—spare me, spare me the rest." *

The old man bent down, and paused for a few moments before he resumed.

"Crompton lost his eye, but my punishment was as severe as his. People who are very vain are usually equally susceptible, and they who feel one thing acutely will so feel another. For years, ay, for many years afterwards, the recollection of my folly goaded me with the bitterest and most unceasing remorse. Had I committed murder, my conscience could scarce have afflicted me more severely. I did not regain my self-esteem, till I had somewhat repaired the injury I had done. Long after that time, Crompton was in prison, in great and overwhelming distress. I impoverished myself to release him; I sustained him and his family till fortune rendered my assistance no longer necessary; and no triumphs were ever more sweet to me than the sacrifices I was forced to submit to, in order to restore him to prosperity.

"It is natural to hope that this accident had at least the effect of curing me of my fault; but it requires philosophy in yourself, or your advisers, to render remorse of future avail. How could I amend my fault, when I was not even aware of it?—Smarting under the effects, I investigated not the cause, and I attributed to irascibility, and vindictiveness, what had a deeper and more dangerous origin.

"At college, in spite of all my advantages of birth, fortune, health, and intellectual acquirements, I had many things besides the one enemy of remorse to corrode my tranquillity of mind. I was sure to find some one to excel me in something, and this was enough to embitter my peace. Our living Goldsmith is my favorite poet, and I perhaps insensibly venerate the genius the more because I find something congenial in the infirmities of the man. *I* can fully credit the anecdotes recorded of him. *I* too could once have been jealous of a puppet handling a spontoon; *I* too could once have been miserable if two ladies at the theatre were more the objects of attention than myself! You, Clarence, will not despise me for this confession; those who knew me less would. Fools! there is no man so great as not to have some littleness more predominant than all his greatness. Our virtues are the dupes, and often only the playthings, of our follies!

"I entered the world—with what advantages, and what avidity!—I smile, but it is mournfully, in looking back to that day. Though rich, high-born, and good-looking, I possessed not one of these three qualities in that eminence which could alone satisfy my love of superiority, and desire of effect. I knew this somewhat humiliating truth, for, though vain, I was not conceited. Vanity, indeed, is the very antidote to conceit; for while the former makes us all *nerve* to the opinion of others, the latter is perfectly satisfied with its opinion of itself.

"I knew this truth, and as Pope, if he could not be the greatest of poets, resolved to be the most correct, so I strove, since I could not be the handsomest, the wealthiest, and the noblest of my contemporaries, to excel them, at least, in the grace and consummateness of manner; and in this, after incredible pains, after diligent apprenticeship in the world, and intense study in the closet, I at last flattered myself that I had succeeded. Of all success, while we are yet in the flush of youth, and its capacities of

* This instance of vanity, and indeed the whole of Talbot's history, is literally from facts.

enjoyment, I can imagine none more intoxicating or gratifying than the success of society, and I had certainly some years of its triumph and *éclat.* I was courted, followed, flattered, and sought by the most envied and fastidious circles in England, and even in Paris; for society, so indifferent to those who disdain it, overwhelms with its gratitude—profuse though brief—those who devote themselves to its amusement. The victim to sameness and *ennui* it offers, like the pallid and luxurious Roman, a reward for a new pleasure; and, as long as our industry or talent can afford the pleasure, the reward is ours. At that time, then, I reaped the full harvest of my exertions; the disappointment and vexation were of later date.

"I now come to the great era of my life—Love. Among my acquaintance was Lady Mary Walden, a widow of high birth, and noble, though not powerful connections. She lived about twenty miles from London, in a beautiful retreat; and, though not rich, her jointure, rendered ample by economy, enabled her to indulge her love of society. Her house was always as full as its size would permit, and I was among the most welcome of its visitors. She had an only daughter—even now, through the dim mists of years, that beautiful and fairy form rises still and shining before me, undimmed by sorrow, unfaded by time. Caroline Walden was the object of general admiration, and her mother, who attributed the avidity with which her invitations were accepted by all the wits and fine gentlemen of the day to the charms of her own conversation, little suspected the face and wit of her daughter to be the magnet of attraction. I had no idea at that time of marriage, still less could I have entertained such a notion, unless the step had greatly exalted my rank and prospects.

"The poor and powerless Caroline Walden was therefore the last person for whom I had what the jargon of mothers terms 'serious intentions.' However, I was struck with her exceeding loveliness, and amused by the vivacity of her manners; moreover, my vanity was excited by the hope of distancing all my competitors for the smiles of the young beauty. Accordingly I laid myself out to please, and neglected none of those subtle and almost secret attentions which, of all flatteries, are the most delicate and successful: and I succeeded. Caroline loved me with all the earnestness and devotion which characterize the love of woman. It never occurred to her that I was only trifling with those affections which it seemed so ardently my intention to win. She knew that my fortune was large enough to dispense with the necessity of fortune with my wife, and in birth she would have equalled men of greater pretensions to myself; added to this, long adulation had made her sensible, though not vain, of her attractions, and she listened with a credulous ear to the insinuated flatteries I was so well accustomed to instil.

"Never shall I forget—no, though I double my present years—the shock, the wildness of despair with which she first detected the selfishness of my homage; with which she saw that I had only mocked her trusting simplicity; and that while she had been lavishing the richest treasures of her heart before the burning altars of Love, my idol had been vanity, and my offerings deceit. She tore herself from the profanation of my grasp; she shrouded herself from my presence. All interviews with me were rejected; all my letters returned to me unopened; and though, in the repentance of my heart, I entreated, I urged her to accept vows that were no longer insincere, her pride became her punishment, as well as my own. In a moment of bitter and desperate feeling, she accepted the offers of another, and made the marriage bond a fatal and irrevocable barrier to our reconciliation and union.

"Oh! how I now cursed my infatuation; how passionately I recalled the past! how coldly I turned from the hollow and false world, to whose service I had sacrificed my happiness, to muse and madden over the prospects I had destroyed, and the loving and noble heart I had rejected! Alas! after all, what is so ungrateful as that world for which we renounce so much! Its votaries resemble the Gymnosophists of old, and while they profess to make their chief end pleasure, we can only learn that they expose themselves to every torture and every pain!

"Lord Merton, the man whom Caroline now called husband, was among the wealthiest and most dissipated of his order; and two years after our separation I met once more with the victim of my unworthiness, blazing in 'the full front' of courtly splendor! the leader of its gaieties, and the cynosure of her followers. Intimate with the same society, we were per-

petually cast together, and Caroline was proud of displaying the indifference towards me, which, if she felt not, she had at least learnt artfully to assume. This indifference was her ruin. The depths of my evil passion were again sounded and aroused, and I resolved yet to humble the pride and conquer the coldness which galled to the very quick the morbid acuteness of my self-love. I again attached myself to her train—I bowed myself to the very dust before her. What to me were her chilling reply and disdainful civilities?—only still stronger excitements to persevere.

"I spare you and myself the gradual progress of my schemes. A woman may recover her first passion, it is true; but then she must replace it with another. That other was denied to Coroline: she had not even children to engross her thoughts and to occupy her affections; and the gay world, which to many becomes an object, was to her only an escape.

"Clarence, my triumph came! Lady Walden (who had never known our secret) invited me to her house: Caroline was there. In the same spot where we had so often stood before, and in which her earliest affections were insensibly breathed away, in that same spot I drew from her colorless and trembling lips the confession of her weakness, the restored and pervading power of my remembrance.

"But Caroline was a proud and virtuous woman: even while her heart betrayed her, her mind resisted; and in the very avowal of her unconquered attachment, she renounced and discarded me forever. I was not an ungenerous, though a vain man; but my generosity was wayward, tainted, and imperfect. I could have borne the separation; I could have severed myself from her; I could have flown to the uppermost parts of the earth; I could have hoarded there my secret, yet unextinguished love, and never disturbed her quiet by a murmur; but then the fiat of separation must have come from *me!* My vanity could not bear that *her* lips should reject me; that *my* part was not to be the nobility of sacrifice, but the submission of resignation. However, my better feelings were aroused, and though I could not stifle, I concealed, my selfish repinings. We parted: she returned to town, I buried myself in the country; and, amidst the literary studies to which, though by fits and starts, I was passionately devoted, I endeavored to forget my ominous and guilty love.

"But I was then too closely bound to the world not to be perpetually reminded of its events. My retreat was thronged with occasional migrators from London; my books were mingled with the news and scandal of the day. All spoke to me of Lady Merton; not as I loved to picture her to myself, pale and sorrowful, and brooding over my image; but gay, dissipated, the dispenser of smiles, the prototype of joy. I contrasted this account of her with the melancholy and gloom of my own feelings, and I resented her seeming happiness as an insult to myself.

"In this angry and fretful mood I returned to London. My empire was soon resumed; and now, Linden, comes the most sickening part of my confessions. Vanity is a growing and insatiable disease: what seems to its desires as wealth to-day, to-morrow it rejects as poverty. I was at first contented to know that I was beloved; by degrees, slow, yet sure, I desired that others should know it also. I longed to display my power over the celebrated and courted Lady Merton; and to put the last crown to my reputation and importance. The envy of others is the food of our own self-love. Oh, you know not, you dream not, of the galling mortifications to which a proud woman, whose love commands her pride, is subjected! I imposed upon Caroline the most humiliating, the most painful trials; I would allow her to see none but those I pleased; to go to no place where I withheld my consent; and I hesitated not to exert and testify my power over her affections, in proportion to the publicity of the opportunity.

"Yet, with all this littleness, would you believe that I loved Caroline with the most ardent and engrossing passion? I have paused behind her, in order to kiss the ground she trod on; I have staid whole nights beneath her window, to catch one glimpse of her passing form, even though I had spent hours of the day-time in her society; and, though my love burned and consumed me, like a fire, I would not breathe a single wish against her innocence, or take advantage of my power to accomplish what I knew, from her virtue and pride, no atonement could possibly repay. Such are the inconsistencies of the heart, and such, while they prevent our perfection, redeem us from

the utterness of vice! Never, even in my wildest days, was I blind to the glory of virtue, yet never, till my latest years, have I enjoyed the faculty to avail myself of my perception. I resembled the mole, which by Boyle is supposed to possess the idea of light, but to be unable to comprehend the objects on which it shines.

"Among the varieties of my prevailing sin, was a weakness, common enough to worldly men. While I ostentatiously played off the love I had *excited*, I could not bear to show the love I *felt*. In our country, and perhaps, though in a less degree, in all other highly artificial states, enthusiasm, or even feeling of any kind, is ridiculous; and I could not endure the thought that my treasured and secret affections should be dragged from their retreat, to be cavilled and carped at by

Every beardless, vain comparative.

"This weakness brought on the catastrophe of my love; for, mark me, Clarence, it is through our weaknesses that our vices are punished! One night I went to a masquerade; and, while I was sitting in a remote corner, three of my acquaintances, whom I recognized, though they knew it not, approached and rallied me upon my *romantic* attachment to Lady Merton. One of them was a woman of a malicious and sarcastic wit; the other two were men whom I disliked, because their pretensions interfered with mine; they were diners-out, and anecdote-mongers. Stung to the quick by their sarcasms and laughter, I replied in a train of mingled arrogance and jest; at last I spoke slightingly of the person in question; and these profane and false lips dared not only to disown the faintest love to that being who was more to me than all on earth, but even to speak of herself with ridicule, and her affection with disdain.

"In the midst of this, I turned and beheld, within hearing, a figure which I knew upon the moment. O heaven! the burning shame and agony of that glance!—It raised its mask—I saw that blanched cheek, and that trembling lip! and I knew that the iron had indeed entered into her soul.

"Clarence, I never beheld her again alive. Within a week from that time she was a corpse. She had borne much, suffered much, and murmured not; but this shock pressed too hard, came too home, and from the hand of him for whom she would have sacrificed all! I stood by her in death; I beheld my work; and I turned away, a wanderer and a pilgrim upon the face of the earth. Verily, I have had my reward."

The old man paused, in great emotion; and Clarence, who could offer him no consolation, did not break the silence. In a few minutes Talbot continued—

"From that time, the smile of woman was nothing to me; I seemed to grow old in a single day. Life lost to me all its objects. A dreary and desert blank stretched itself before me—the sounds of creation had only in my ears one voice—the past, the future, one image. I left my country for twenty years, and lived an idle and hopeless man in the various courts of the continent.

"At the age of fifty I returned to England; the wounds of the past had not disappeared, but they were scarred over; and I longed, like the rest of my species, to have an object in view. At that age, if we have seen much of mankind, and possess the talents to profit by our knowledge, we must be one of two sects: a politician or a philosopher. My time was not yet arrived for the latter, so I resolved to become the former; but this was denied me, for my vanity had assumed a different shape. It is true that I cared no longer for the reputation women can bestow; but I was eager for the applause of men, and I did not like the long labor necessary to attain it. I wished to make a short road to my object, and I eagerly followed every turn but the right one, in the hopes of its leading me sooner to my goal.

"The great characteristic of a vain man, in contradistinction to an ambitious man, and his eternal obstacle to a high and honorable fame, is this: he requires for any expenditure of trouble too speedy a reward; he cannot wait for years, and climb, step by step, to a lofty object: whatever he attemps, he must seize at a single grasp. Added to this, he is incapable of an exclusive attention to one end; the universality of his cravings is not contented, unless it devours all; and thus he is perpetually doomed to fritter away his energies by grasping at the trifling baubles within his reach, and in gathering the worthless fruit, which a single sun can mature.

"This, then, was my fault, and the cause

of my failure. I could not give myself up to finance, nor puzzle through the intricacies of commerce: even the common parliamentary drudgeries of constant attendance and late hours, were insupportable to me; and so after two or three 'splendid orations,' as my friends termed them, I was satisfied with the puffs of the pamphleteers, and closed my political career. I was, now, then, the wit and the conversationalist. With my fluency of speech and variety of information, these were easy distinctions; and the popularity of a dinner-table, or the approbation of a literary coterie, consoled me for the more public and more durable applause I had resigned.

"But even this gratification did not last long. I fell ill; and the friends who gathered round the wit fled from the valetudinarian. This disgusted me, and when I was sufficiently recovered, I again returned to the continent. But I had a fit of misanthropy and solitude upon me, and so it was not to courts and cities, the scenes of former gaieties, that I repaired; on the contrary, I hired a house by one of the most sequestered of the Swiss lakes, and, avoiding the living, I surrendered myself, without interruption or control, to commune with the dead. I surrounded myself with books, and pored, with a curious and searching eye, into those works which treat particularly upon 'man.' My passions were over, my love of pleasure and society was dried up, and I had now no longer the obstacles which forbid us to be wise; I unlearnt the precepts my manhood had acquired, and in my old age I commenced philosopher; Religion lent me her aid, and by her holy lamp my studies were conned and my hermitage illumined.

"There are certain characters which, in the world, are evil, and in seclusion are good: Rousseau, whom I know well, is one of them. These persons are of a morbid sensitiveness, which is perpetually galled by collision with others. In short, they are under the dominion of VANITY; and that vanity, never satisfied, and always restless in the various competitions of society, produces 'envy, malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness!' but, in solitude, the good and benevolent dispositions with which our self-love no longer interferes, have room to expand and ripen without being cramped by opposing interests; this will account for many seeming discrepancies in character. There are also some men, in whom old age supplies the place of solitude, and Rousseau's antagonist and mental antipodes, Voltaire, is of this order. The pert, the malignant, the arrogant, the lampooning author, in his youth and manhood, has become, in his old age, the mild, the benevolent, and the venerable philosopher. Nothing is more absurd than to receive the characters of great men so implicitly upon the word of a biographer; and nothing can be less surprising than our eternal disputes upon individuals; for no man throughout life is the same being, and each season of our existence contradicts the characteristics of the last.

"And now in my solitude and my old age, a new spirit entered within me; the game in which I had engaged so vehemently was over for me; and I joined to my experience as a player, my coolness as a spectator; I no longer struggled with my species, and I began insensibly to love them. I established schools, and founded charities; and, in secret, but active, services to mankind, I employed my exertions and lavished my desires.

"From this amendment I date the peace of mind and elasticity which I now enjoy; and in my later years, the happiness which I pursued in my youth and maturity so hotly, yet so ineffectually, has flown unsolicited to my breast.

"About five years ago I came again to England, with the intention of breathing my last in the country which gave me birth. I retired to my family home; I endeavored to divert myself in agricultural improvements, and my rental was consumed in speculation. This did not please me long: I sought society—society in Yorkshire! You may imagine the result: I was out of my element; the mere distance from the metropolis, from all genial companionship, sickened me with a vague feeling of desertion and solitude: for the first time in my life I felt my age and my celibacy. Once more I returned to town, a complaint attacked my lungs, the physicians recommended the air of this neighborhood, and I chose the residence I now inhabit. Without being exactly in London, I can command its advantages, and obtain society as a recreation without buying it by restraint. I am not fond of new faces, nor any longer covetous of show; my old servant therefore contented me: for the future, I shall, however, satisfy your fears, remove to a safer habitation, and obtain a more nu-

merous guard. It is, at all events, a happiness to me that fate, in casting me here, and exposing me to something of danger, has raised up, in you, a friend for my old age, and selected from this great universe of strangers, one being to convince my heart that it has not outlived affection. My tale is done; may you profit by its moral!"

When Talbot said that our characters were undergoing a perpetual change he should have made this reservation, the one ruling passion remains to the last; it may be modified, but it never departs: and it is these modifications which do, for the most part, shape out the channels of our change: or, as Helvetius has beautifully expressed it, "we resemble those vessels which the waves still carry towards the south, when the north wind has ceased to blow," but in our old age, this passion, having little to feed on, becomes sometimes dormant and inert, and then our good qualities rise, as it were from an incubus, and have their sway.

Yet these cases are not common, and Talbot was a remarkable instance, for he was a remarkable man. His mind had not slept while the age advanced, and thus it had swelled as it were from the bondage of its earlier passions and prejudices. But little did he think, in the blindness of self-delusion—though it was so obvious to Clarence, that he could have smiled if he had not rather inclined to weep at the frailties of human nature—little did he think that the vanity which had cost him so much remained "a monarch still," undeposed alike by his philosophy, his religion, or his remorse; and that, debarred by circumstances from all wider and more dangerous field, it still lavished itself upon trifles unworthy of his powers, and puerilities dishonoring his age. Folly is a courtesan whom we ourselves seek, whose favors we solicit at an enormous price! and who, like Lais, finds philosophers at her door, scarcely less frequently than the rest of mankind!

CHAPTER XXI.

Mrs. Trinket. What d'ye buy—what d'ye lack, gentlemen?

Gloves, ribbons, and essences—ribbons, gloves, and essences.—ETHEREGE.

"AND so, my love," said Mr. Copperas, one morning at breakfast, to his wife, his right leg being turned over his left, and his dexter hand conveying to his mouth a huge morsel of buttered cake,—"and so, my love, they say that the old fool is going to leave the jackanapes all his fortune?"

"They do say so, Mr. C.; for my part I am quite out of patience with the art of the young man; I dare say he is no better than he should be; he always had a sharp look, and for ought I know, there may be more in that robbery than you or I dreamt of, Mr. Copperas. It was a pity," continued Mrs. Copperas, upbraiding her lord with true matrimonial tenderness and justice, for the consequences of his having acted from *her* advice—"it was a pity, Mr. C., that you should have refused to lend him the pistols to go to the old fellow's assistance, for then who knows but——"

"I might have converted them into *pocket* pistols," interrupted Mr. C., "and not have overshot the mark, my dear—ha, ha, ha!"

"Lord, Mr. Copperas, you are always making a joke of everything."

"No, my dear, for once I am making a joke of nothing."

"Well, I declare it's shameful," cried Mrs. Copperas, still following up her own indignant meditations, "and after taking such notice of Adolphus, too, and all!"

"Notice, my dear! mere words," returned Mr. Copperas, "mere words, like ventilators, which make a great deal of air, but *never raise the wind;* but don't put yourself in a *stew*, my love, for the doctors say that *copperas in a stew* is poison!"

At this moment Mr. de Warens, throwing open the door, announced Mr. Brown; that gentleman entered, with a sedate, but cheerful air. "Well, Mrs. Copperas, your servant; any table linen wanted? Mr. Copperas, how do you do? I can give you a hint about the stocks. Master Copperas, you are looking bravely; don't you think he wants some new pinbefores, ma'am? But Mr. Clarence Linden, where is he? Not up yet, I dare say? Ah,

the present generation is a generation of sluggards, as his worthy *aunt*, Mrs. Minden, used to say."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Copperas, with a disdainful toss of the head, "I know nothing about the young man. He has left us: a very mysterious piece of business indeed, Mr. Brown; and now I think of it, I can't help saying that we were by no means pleased with your introduction; and by the by, the chairs you bought for us at the sale were a mere take-in, so slight that Mr. Walruss broke two of them by only sitting down."

"Indeed, ma'am?" said Mr. Brown, with expostulating gravity; "but then Mr. Walruss is so very corpulent. But the young gentleman, what of him?" continued the broker, artfully turning from the point in dispute.

"Lord, Mr. Brown, don't ask me: it was the unluckiest step we ever made to admit him into the bosom of our family; quite a viper, I assure you; absolutely robbed poor Adolphus."

"Lord help us!" said Mr. Brown, with a look which "cast a browner horror" o'er the room, "who would have thought it? and such a pretty young man!"

"Well," said Mr. Copperas, who, occupied in finishing the buttered cake, had hitherto kept silence, "I must be off. Tom—I mean de Warens—have you stopped the coach?"

"Yees, sir."

"And what coach is it?"

"It be the Swallow, sir."

"Oh, very well. And now, Mr. Brown, having swallowed *in the roll*, I will e'en *roll in the Swallow*—Ha, ha, ha!—At any rate," thought Mr. Copperas, as he descended the stairs, "*he* has not heard that before."

"Ha, ha!" gravely chuckled Mr. Brown; "what a very facetious, lively gentleman Mr. Copperas is. But touching this ungrateful young man, Mr. Linden, ma'am?"

"Oh don't tease me, Mr. Brown, I must see after my domestics: ask Mr. Talbot, the old miser, in the next house, the *havarr*, as the French say."

"Well, now," said Mr. Brown, following the good lady down stairs—"how distressing for me—and to say that he was Mrs. Minden's nephew too!"

But Mr. Brown's curiosity was not so easily satisfied, and finding Mr. de Warens leaning over the "front" gate, and "pursuing with wistful eyes" the departing "Swallow," he stopped, and, accosting him, soon possessed himself of the facts that "old Talbot had been robbed and murdered, but that Mr. Linden had brought him to life again; and that old Talbot had given him a hundred thousand pounds, and adopted him as his son; and that how Mr. Linden was going to be sent to foreign parts, as an ambassador, or governor, or great person; and that how meester and meeses were quite 'cut up' about it."

All these particulars having been duly deposited in the mind of Mr. Brown, they produced an immediate desire to call upon the young gentleman, who, to say nothing of his being so very nearly related to his old customer, Mrs. Minden, was always so very great a favorite with him, Mr. Brown.

Accordingly, as Clarence was musing over his approaching departure, which was now very shortly to take place, he was somewhat startled by the apparition of Mr. Brown—"Charming day, sir—charming day," said the friend of Mrs. Minden—"just called in to congratulate you. I have a few articles, sir, to present you with—quite rarities, I assure you—quite presents, I may say. I picked them up at a sale of the late Lady Waddilove's most valuable effects. They are just the things, sir, for a gentleman going on a foreign mission. A most curious ivory chest, with an Indian padlock, to hold confidential letters—belonged formerly, sir, to the great Mogul; and a beautiful diamond snuff-box, sir, with a picture of Louis XIV. on it, prodigiously fine, and will look so loyal too: and, sir, if you have any old aunts in the county, to send a farewell present to, I have some charmingly fine cambric, a superb Dresden tea set, and a lovely little 'ape,' stuffed by the late Lady W. herself."

"My good sir," began Clarence.

"Oh, no thanks, sir,—none at all—too happy to serve a relation of Mrs. Minden—always proud to keep up family connections. You will be at home to-morrow, sir, at eleven—I will look in—your most humble servant, Mr. Linden." And, almost upsetting Talbot, who had just entered, Mr. Brown bowed himself out.

CHAPTER XXII.

We talked with open heart and tongue,
Affectionate and true;
A pair of friends, though I was young
And Matthew seventy-two.—WORDSWORTH.

MEANWHILE the young artist proceeded rapidly with his picture. Devoured by his enthusiasm, and utterly engrossed by the sanguine anticipation of a fame which appeared to him already won, he allowed himself no momentary interval of relaxation; his food was eaten by starts, and without stirring from his easel; his sleep was broken and brief by feverish dreams; he no longer roved with Clarence, when the evening threw her shade over his labors; all air and exercise, he utterly relinquished; shut up in his narrow chamber, he passed the hours in a fervid and passionate self-commune, which, even in suspense from his work, rivetted his thoughts the closer to its object. All companionship, all intrusion, he bore with irritability and impatience. Even Clarence found himself excluded from the presence of his friend; even his nearest relation, who doated on the very ground which he hallowed with his footstep, was banished from the haunted sanctuary of the painter; from the most placid of human beings, Warner seemed to have grown the most morose.

Want of rest, abstinence from food, the impatience of the strained spirit and jaded nerves, all contributed to waste the health, whlie they excited the genius, of the artist. A crimson spot, never before seen there, burnt in the centre of his pale cheek; his eye glowed with a brilliant, but unnatural fire; his features grew sharp and attenuated; his bones worked from his whitening and transparent skin; and the soul and frame, turned from their proper and kindly union, seemed contesting, with fierce struggles, which should obtain the mastery and the triumph.

But neither his new prospects, nor the coldness of his friend, diverted the warm heart of Clarence from meditating how he could most effectually serve the artist before he departed from the country. It was a peculiar object of desire to Warner that the most celebrated painter of the day, who was in terms of intimacy with Talbot, and who with the benevolence of real superiority was known to take a keen interest in the success of more youthful and inexperienced genius;—it was a peculiar object of desire to Warner, that Sir Joshua Reynolds should see his picture before it was completed; and Clarence, aware of this wish, easily obtained from Talbot a promise that it should be effected. That was the least service of his zeal: touched by the earnestness of Linden's friendship, anxious to oblige in any way his preserver, and well pleased himself to be the patron of merit, Talbot readily engaged to obtain for Warner whatever the attention and favor of high rank or literary distinction could bestow. "As for his picture," said Tablot (when, the evening before Clarence's departure, the latter was renewing the subject), "I shall myself become the purchaser, and at a price which will enable our friend to afford leisure and study for the completion of his next attempt; but even at the risk of offending your friendship, and disappointing your expectations, I will frankly tell you, that I think Warner overrates, perhaps not his talents, but his powers; not his ability for doing something great hereafter, but his capacity of doing it at present. In the pride of his heart, he has shown me many of his designs, and I am somewhat of a judge: they want experience, cultivation, taste, and above all, a deeper study of the Italian masters. They all have the defects of a feverish coloring, an ambitious desire of effect, a wavering and imperfect outline, an ostentatious and unnatural strength of light and shadow; they show, it is true, a genius of no ordinary stamp, but one ill-regulated, inexperienced, and utterly left to its own suggestions for a model. However, I am glad he wishes for the opinion of one necessarily the best judge; let him bring the picture here by Thursday; on that day my friend has promised to visit me; and now let us talk of you and your departure."

The intercourse of men of different ages is essentially unequal: it must always partake more or less of advice on one side and deference on the other; and although the easy and unpedantic turn of Talbot's conversation made his remarks rather entertaining than obviously admonitory, yet they were necessarily tinged by his experience, and regulated by his interest in the fortunes of his young friend.

"My dearest Clarence," said he, affectionately, "we are about to bid each other a long farewell. I will not damp your hopes and an-

ticipations by insisting on the little chance there is that you should ever see me again. You are about to enter upon the great world, and have within you the desire and the power of success; let me flatter myself that you can profit by my experience. Among the Colloquia of Erasmus, there is a very entertaining dialogue between Apicius and a man who, desirous of giving a feast to a very large and miscellaneous party, comes to consult the epicure what will be the best means to give satisfaction to all. Now you shall be this Spudæus, (so I think he is called,) and I will be Apicius; for the world, after all, is nothing more than a great feast of different strangers, with different tastes, and of different ages, and we must learn to adapt ourselves to their minds, and our temptations to their passions, if we wish to fascinate or even to content them. Let me then call your attention to the hints and maxims which I have in this paper amused myself with drawing up for your instruction. Write to me from time to time, and I will, in replying to your letters, give you the best advice in my power. For the rest, my dear boy, I have only to request that you will be frank, and I, in my turn, will promise that, when I cannot assist, I will never reprove. And now, Clarence, as the hour is late, and you leave us early to-morrow, I will no longer detain you. God bless you and keep you. You are going to enjoy life—I to anticipate death; so that you can find in me little congenial to yourself; but, as the good Pope said to our Protestant countryman, 'Whatever the difference between us, I know well that an old man's blessing is never without its value.' "

As Clarence clasped his benefactor's hand, the tears gushed from his eyes. Is there one being, stubborn as the rock to misfortune, whom kindness does not affect? For my part, kindness seems to me to come with a double grace and tenderness from the old; it seems in them the hoarded and long purified benevolence of years; as if it had survived and conquered the baseness and selfishness of the ordeal it had passed; as if the winds, which had broken the form, had swept in vain across the heart, and the frosts, which had chilled the blood and whitened the thin locks, had possessed no power over the warm tide of the affections. It is the triumph of nature over art; it is the voice of the angel which is yet within us. Nor is this all: the tenderness of age is twice blessed—blessed in its trophies over the obduracy of encrusting and withering years, blessed because it is tinged with the sanctity of the grave; because it tells us that the heart will blossom even upon the precincts of the tomb, and flatters us with the inviolacy and immortality of love.

CHAPTER XXIII.

> Cannot I create,
> Cannot I form, cannot I fashion forth
> Another world, another universe?—KEATS.

THE next morning Clarence, in his way out of town, directed his carriage (the last and not the least acceptable present from Talbot) to stop at Warner's door. Although it was scarcely sunrise, the aged grandmother of the artist was stirring, and opened the door to the early visitor. Clarence passed her with a brief salutation—hurried up the narrow stairs, and found himself in the artist's chamber. The windows were closed, and the air of the room was confined and hot. A few books, chiefly of history and poetry, stood in confused disorder upon some shelves opposite the window. Upon a table beneath them lay a flute, once the cherished recreation of the young painter, but now long neglected and disused; and, placed exactly opposite to Warner, so that his eyes might open upon his work, was the high-prized and already more than half-finished picture.

Clarence bent over the bed; the cheek of the artist rested upon his arm in an attitude unconsciously picturesque; the other arm was tossed over the coverlid, and Clarence was shocked to see how emaciated it had become. But ever and anon the lips of the sleeper moved restlessly, and words, low and inarticulate, broke out. Sometimes he started abruptly, and a bright, but evanescent flush, darted over his faded and hollow cheek; and once the fingers of the thin hand, which lay upon the bed, expanded, and suddenly closed in a firm and almost painful grasp; it was then that, for the first time, the words of the artist became distinct.

"Ay, ay," said he, "I have thee, I have thee, at last. Long, very long, thou hast burnt up

my heart like fuel, and mocked me, and laughed at my idle efforts; but now, now, I have thee. Fame, Honor, Immortality, whatever thou art called, I have thee, and thou canst not escape; but it is almost too late!" And, as if wrung by some sudden pain, the sleeper turned heavily round, groaned audibly, and awoke.

"My friend," said Clarence, soothingly, and taking his hand, "I have come to bid you farewell. I am just setting off for the continent, but I could not leave England without once more seeing you. I have good news, too, for you." And Clarence proceeded to repeat Talbot's wish that Warner should bring the picture to his house on the following Thursday, that Sir Joshua might inspect it. He added also, in terms the flattery of which his friendship could not resist exaggerating, Talbot's desire to become the purchaser of the picture.

"Yes," said the artist, as his eye glanced delightedly over his labor; "yes, I believe when it is once seen there will be many candidates!"

"No doubt," answered Clarence; "and for that reason you cannot blame Talbot for wishing to forestall all other competitors for the prize;" and then continuing the encouraging nature of the conversation, Clarence enlarged upon the new hopes of his friend, besought him to take time, to spare his health, and not to injure both himself and his performance by over anxiety and hurry. Clarence concluded by retailing Talbot's assurance that in all cases and circumstances he (Talbot) considered himself pledged to be Warner's supporter and friend.

With something of impatience, mingled with pleasure, the painter listened to all these details; nor was it to Linden's zeal, nor to Talbot's generosity, but rather to the excess of his own merit, that he secretly attributed the brightening prospect afforded him.

The indifference which Warner, though of a disposition naturally kind, evinced at parting with a friend who had always taken so strong an interest in his behalf, and whose tears at that moment contrasted forcibly enough with the apathetic coldness of his own farewell, was a remarkable instance how acute vividness on a single point will deaden feeling on all others. Occupied solely and burningly with one intense thought, which was to him—love, friendship, health, peace, wealth, Warner could not excite feelings, languid and exhausted with many and fiery conflicts, to objects of minor interest, and perhaps he inwardly rejoiced that his musings and his study would henceforth be sacred even from friendship.

Deeply affected, for his nature was exceedingly unselfish, generous, and susceptible, Clarence tore himself away, placed in the grandmother's hand a considerable portion of the sum he had received from Talbot, hurried into his carriage, and found himself on the high road to fortune, pleasure, distinction, and the continent.

But while Clarence, despite of every advantage before him, hastened to a court of dissipation and pleasure, with feelings in which regretful affection for those he had left darkened his worldly hopes, and mingled with the sanguine anticipations of youth, Warner, poor, low-born, wasted with sickness, destitute of friends, shut out by his temperament from the pleasures of his age, burned with hopes far less alloyed than those of Clarence, and found in them, for the sacrifice of all else, not only a recompense, but a triumph.

Thursday came. Warner had made one request of Talbot, which had with difficulty been granted: it was that he himself might, unseen, be the auditor of the great painter's criticisms, and that Sir Joshua should be perfectly unaware of his presence. It had been granted with difficulty, because Talbot wished to spare Warner the pain of hearing remarks which he felt would be likely to fall far short of the sanguine self-elation of the young artist; and it *had* been granted because Talbot imagined that, even should this be the case, the pain would be more than counterbalanced by the salutary effect it might produce. Alas! vanity calculates but poorly upon the vanity of others! What a virtue we should distil from frailty; what a world of pain we should save our brethren, if we would suffer our own weakness to be the measure of theirs!

Thursday came; the painting was placed by the artist's own hand in the most favorable light; a curtain, hung behind it, served as a screen for Warner, who, retiring to his hiding-place, surrendered his heart to delicious forebodings of the critic's wonder, and golden anticipations of the future destiny of his darling work. Not a fear dashed the full and smooth cup of his

self-enjoyment. He had lain awake the whole of the night, in restless and joyous impatience for the morrow. At day-break he had started from his bed, he had unclosed his shutters, he had hung over his picture with a fondness greater, if possible, than he had ever known before; like a mother, he felt as if his own partiality was but a part of an universal tribute: and, as his aged relative turned her dim eyes to the painting, and, in her innocent idolatry, rather of the artist than his work, praised, and expatiated, and foretold, his heart whispered, "If it wring this worship from ignorance, what will be the homage of science?"

He who first laid down the now hackneyed maxim, that diffidence is the companion of genius, knew very little of the workings of the human heart. True, there may have been a few such instances, and it is probable that in this maxim, as in most, the exception made the rule. But what could ever reconcile genius to its sufferings, its sacrifices, its fevered inquietudes, the intense labor which can alone produce what the shallow world deems the giant offspring of a momentary inspiration; what could ever reconcile it to these but the haughty and unquenchable consciousness of internal power; the hope which has the fulness of certainty that in proportion to the toil is the reward; the sanguine and impetuous anticipation of glory, which burst the boundaries of time and space, and ranges immortality with a prophet's rapture? Rob Genius of its confidence, of its lofty self-esteem, and you clip the wings of the eagle: you domesticate, it is true, the wanderer you could not hitherto comprehend, in the narrow bounds of your household affections; you abase and tame it more to the level of your ordinary judgments, but you take from it the power to soar; the hardihood which was content to brave the thunder-cloud and build its eyrie on the rock, for the proud triumph of rising above its kind, and contemplating with a nearer eye the majesty of heaven.

But if something of presumption is a part of the very essence of genius, in Warner it was doubly natural, for he was still in the heat and flush of a design, the defects of which he had not yet had the leisure to examine; and his talents, self-taught and self-modelled, had never received either the excitement of emulation or the chill of discouragement from the study of the master-pieces of his art.

The painter had not been long alone in his concealment before he heard steps; his heart beat violently, the door opened, and he saw, through a small hole which he had purposely made in the curtain, a man with a benevolent and prepossessing countenance, whom he instantly recognized as Sir Joshua Reynolds, enter the room, accompanied by Talbot. They walked up to the picture; the painter examined it closely, and in perfect silence. "Silence," thought Warner, "is the best homage of admiration;" but he trembled with impatience to hear the admiration confirmed by words,—those words came too soon.

"It is the work of a clever man, certainly," said Sir Joshua; "*but*" (terrible monosyllable) "of one utterly unskilled in the grand principles of his art: look here, and here, and here, for instance;" and the critic, perfectly unconscious of the torture he inflicted, proceeded to point out the errors of the work. Oh! the agony, the withering agony of that moment to the ambitious Artist!—In vain he endeavored to bear up against the judgment—in vain he endeavored to persuade himself that it was the voice of envy which in those cold, measured, *defining* accents, fell like drops of poison upon his heart. He felt at once, and as if by a magical inspiration, the truth of the verdict; the scales of self-delusion fell from his eyes; by a hideous mockery, a kind of terrible pantomime, his goddess seemed at a word, a breath, transformed into a monster: life, which had been so lately concentrated into a single hope, seemed now, at once and for ever, cramped, curdled, blistered into a single disappointment.

"But," said Talbot, who had in vain attempted to arrest the criticisms of the painter (who, very deaf at all times, was, at that time in particular, engrossed by the self-satisfaction always enjoyed by one expatiating on his favorite topic),—"but," said Talbot, in a louder voice, "you own there is great genius in the design?"

"Certainly, there is genius," replied Sir Joshua, in a tone of calm and complacent good-nature; "but what is genius without culture? You say the artist is young, very young; let him take time—I do not say let him attempt a humbler walk—let him persevere in the lofty one he has chosen, but let him first retrace every step he has taken; let him devote days,

months, years, to the most diligent study of the immortal masters of the divine art, before he attempts (to exhibit, at least,) another historical picture. He has mistaken altogether the nature of invention: a fine invention is nothing more than a fine deviation from, or enlargement on, a fine model: imitation, if noble and general, ensures the best hope of originality. Above all, let your young friend, if he can afford it, visit Italy."

"He *shall* afford it," said Talbot, kindly, "for he shall have whatever advantages I can procure him; but you see the picture is only half completed—he could alter it!"

"*He had better burn it!*" replied the painter, with a gentle smile.

And Talbot, in benevolent despair, hurried his visitor out of the room. He soon returned to seek and console the artist, but the artist was gone; the despised, the fatal picture, the blessing and curse of so many anxious and wasted hours, had vanished also with its creator.

CHAPTER XXIV.

> What is this soul, then? Whence
> Came it?—It does not seem my own, and I
> Have no self-passion or identity!
> Some fearful end must be—
> * * * * *
> There never lived a mortal man, who bent
> His appetite beyond his natural sphere,
> But starved and died.—KEATS'S *Endymion.*

ON entering his home, Warner pushed aside, for the first time in his life with disrespect, his aged and kindly relation, who, as if in mockery of the unfortunate artist, stood prepared to welcome and congratulate his return. Bearing his picture in his arms, he rushed up stairs, hurried into his room, and locked the door. Hastily he tore aside the cloth which had been drawn over the picture; hastily and tremblingly he placed it upon the frame accustomed to support it, and then, with a long, long, eager, searching, scrutinizing glance, he surveyed the once beloved mistress of his worship. Presumption, vanity, exaggerated self-esteem, are, in their punishment, supposed to excite ludicrous, not sympathetic, emotion; but there is an *excess* of feeling, produced by whatever cause it may be, into which, in spite of ourselves, we are forced to enter. Even fear, the most contemptible of the passions, becomes tragic the moment it becomes an agony.

"Well, well!" said Warner at last, speaking very slowly, "it is over—it was a pleasant dream—but it is over—I ought to be thankful for the lesson." Then suddenly changing his mood and tone, he repeated, "Thankful! for what? that I am a wretch—a wretch more utterly hopeless, and miserable, and abandoned, than a man who freights with all his wealth, his children, his wife, the hoarded treasures and blessings of an existence, one ship, one frail, worthless ship, and, standing himself on the shore, sees it suddenly go down! Oh, was I not a fool—a right noble fool—a vain fool—an arrogant fool—a very essence and concentration of all things that make a fool, to believe such delicious marvels of myself! What, man!—(here his eye saw in the opposite glass his features, livid and haggard with disease, and the exhausting feelings which preyed within him)—what, man! would nothing serve thee but to be a genius—*thee*, whom Nature stamped with her curse! Dwarf-like and distorted, mean in stature and lineament, thou wert, indeed, a glorious being to perpetuate grace and beauty, the majesties and dreams of art! Fame for thee, indeed—ha—ha! Glory—ha—ha! a place with Titian, Correggio, Raphael—ha—ha—ha! O, thrice modest, thrice reasonable fool! But this vile daub; this disfigurement of canvas; this loathed and wretched monument of disgrace; this notable canditate for—ha—ha—immortality!—this I have, at least, in my power." And seizing the picture, he dashed it to the ground, and trampled it with his feet upon the dusty boards, till the moist colors presented nothing but one confused and dingy stain.

This sight seemed to recall him for a moment. He paused, lifted up the picture once more, and placed it on the table. "But," he muttered, "might not this critic be envious? am I sure that he judged rightly—fairly? The greatest masters have looked askant and jealous at their pupil's works. And then, how slow, how cold, how damned cold, how indifferently he spoke; why, the very art should have warmed him more. Could he have—No, no, no: it *was* true, it was! I felt the conviction thrill through me like a searing iron. Burn it—did he say—ay—burn it—it shall be done this instant."

And, hastening to the door, he undid the bolt. He staggered back as he beheld his old and nearest surviving relative, the mother of his father, seated upon the ground beside the door, terrified by the exclamations she did not dare to interrupt. She rose slowly, and with difficulty, as she saw him; and, throwing around him the withered arms which had nursed his infancy, exclaimed, "My child! my poor—poor child! what has come to you of late? you, who were so gentle, so mild, so quiet—you are no longer the same—and oh, my son, how ill you look: your father looked so just before he died!"

"Ill!" said he, with a sort of fearful gaiety, "ill—no—I never was so well—I have been in a dream till now—but I have woke at last. Why, it is true that I have been silent and shy, but I will be so no more. I will laugh, and talk, and walk, and make love, and drink wine, and be all that other men are. Oh, we will be so merry. But stay here, while I fetch a light."

"A light, my child, for what?"

"For a funeral!" shouted Warner, and, rushing past her, he descended the stairs, and returned almost in an instant with a light.

Alarmed and terrified, the poor old woman had remained motionless, and weeping violently. Her tears Warner did not seem to notice; he pushed her gently into the room, and began deliberately, and without uttering a syllable, to cut the picture into shreds.

"What are you about, my child?" cried the old woman; "you are mad, it is your beautiful picture that you are destroying!"

Warner did not reply, but, going to the hearth, piled together, with nice and scrupulous care, several pieces of paper, and stick, and matches, into a sort of pyre; then, placing the shreds of the picture upon it, he applied the light, and the whole was instantly in a blaze.

"Look, look!" cried he, in an hysterical tone, "how it burns, and crackles, and blazes! What master ever equalled it now?—no fault now in those colors—no false tints in that light and shade! See how that flame darts up and soars!—that flame is my spirit! Look—is it not restless?—does it not aspire bravely?—why, all its brother flames are grovellers to it!—and now—why don't you look!—it falters—fades — droops — and—ha—ha—ha!—poor idler, the fuel is consumed—and—it is darkness!"

As Warner uttered these words his eyes reeled; the room swam before him; the excitement of his feeble frame had reached its highest pitch; the disease of many weeks had attained its crisis; and, tottering back a few paces, he fell upon the floor, the victim of a delirious and raging fever.

But it was not thus that the young artist was to die. He was reserved for a death, that, like his real nature, had in it more of gentleness and poetry. He recovered, by slow degrees, and his mind, almost in spite of himself, returned to that profession from which it was impossible to divert the thoughts and musings of many years. Not that he resumed the pencil and the easel; on the contrary, he could not endure them in his sight: they appeared, to a mind festered and sore, like a memorial and monument of shame. But he nursed within him a strong and ardent desire to become a pilgrim to that beautiful land of which he had so often dreamed, and which the innocent destroyer of his peace had pointed out as the theatre of inspiration, and the nursery of future fame.

The physicians who, at Talbot's instigation, attended him, looked at his hectic cheek and consumptive frame, and readily flattered his desire: and Talbot, no less interested in Warner's behalf on his own account, than bound by his promise to Clarence, generously extended to the artist that bounty which is the most precious prerogative of the rich. Notwithstanding her extreme age, his grandmother insisted upon attending him: there is in the heart of woman so deep a well of love, that no age can freeze it. They made the voyage: they reached the shore of the myrtle and the vine, and entered the imperial city. The air of Rome seemed at first to operate favorably upon the health of the English artist. His strength appeared to increase, his spirit to expand; and though he had relapsed into more than his original silence and reserve, he resumed, with apparent energy, the labors of the easel: so that they who looked no deeper than the surface might have imagined the scar healed, and the real foundation of future excellence begun.

But while Warner most humbled himself before the gods of the pictured world; while the true principles of the mighty art opened in their fullest glory on his soul; precisely at

this very moment shame and despondency were most bitter at his heart: and while the enthusiasm of the painter kindled, the ambition of the man despaired. But still he went on, transfusing into his canvas the grandeur and simplicity of the Italian school; still, though he felt palpably within him the creeping advance of the deadliest and surest enemy to fame, he pursued, with an unwearied ardor, the mechanical completion of his task; still, the morning found him bending before the easel, and the night brought to his solitary couch meditation, rather than sleep. The fire, the irritability which he had evinced before his illness, had vanished, and the original sweetness of his temper had returned; he uttered no complaint, he dwelt upon no anticipation of success, hope and regret seemed equally dead within him; and it was only when he caught the fond, glad eyes of his aged attendant that his own filled with tears, or that the serenity of his brow darkened into sadness.

This went on for some months; till one evening they found the painter by his window, seated opposite to an unfinished picture; the pencil was still in his hand: the quiet of settled thought was still upon his countenance; the soft breeze of a southern twilight waved the hair livingly from his forehead—the earliest star of a southern sky lent to his cheek something of that subdued lustre which, when touched by enthusiasm, it had been accustomed to wear; but these were only the mockeries of life: life itself was no more! He had died, reconciled, perhaps, to the loss of fame—in discovering that Art is to be loved for itself—and not for the rewards it may bestow upon the Artist.

There are two tombs close to each other in the stranger's burial-place at Rome: they cover those for whom life, unequally long, terminated in the same month. The one is of a woman, bowed with the burthen of many years: the other darkens over the dust of the young artist.

CHAPTER XXV.

Think upon my grief,
And on the justice of my flying hence,
To keep me from a most unholy match.
—SHAKSPEARE.

"BUT are you quite sure," said General St. Leger, "are you quite sure that this girl still permits Mordaunt's addresses?"

"Sure!" cried Miss Diana St. Leger, "sure, General! I saw it with my own eyes. They were standing together in the copse, when I, who had long had my suspicions, crept up, and saw them; and Mr. Mordaunt held her hand, and kissed it every moment. Shocking and indecorous!"

"I hate that man! as proud as Lucifer," growled the General. "Shall we lock her up, or starve her?"

"No, General, something better than that."

"What, my love? flog her!"

"She's too old for that, brother; we'll marry her."

"Marry her!"

"Yes, to Mr. Glumford; you know that he has asked her several times."

"But she cannot bear him."

"We'll make her bear him, General St. Leger."

"But if she marries, I shall have nobody to nurse me when I have the gout."

"Yes, brother: I know of a nice little girl, Martha Richardson, your second cousin's youngest daughter; you know he has fourteen children, and you may have them all, one after another, if you like."

"Very true, Diana—let the jade marry Mr. Glumford."

"She shall," said the sister; "and I'll go about it this very moment: meantime I'll take care that she does not see her lover any more."

About three weeks after this conversation, Mordaunt, who had in vain endeavored to see Isabel, who had not even heard from her, whose letters had been returned to him unopened, and who, consequently, was in despair, received the following note:

"This is the first time I have been able to write to you, at least to get my letter conveyed: it is a strange messenger that I have employed, but I happened formerly to make his acquaintance, and accidentally seeing him to-day, the extremity of the case induced me to give him a commission which I could trust to no one else. Algernon, are not the above sentences written with admirable calmness? are they not very explanatory, very consistent, very cool? and yet do you know that I firmly believe I am going mad. My brain turns round and round, and my hand burns so that I almost think that, like our old nurse's stories of the fiend, it will scorch the paper as I write. And I see strange faces in my sleep, and in my waking, all mocking at me, and they torture and haunt me; and when I look at those faces, I see no human relenting, no! though I

weep and throw myself on my knees, and implore them to save me. Algernon, my only hope is in you. You know that I have always hitherto refused to ruin you; and even now, though I implore you to deliver me, I will not be so selfish as—as—I know not what I write, but if I cannot be your wife—I will not be his! No! if they drag me to church, it shall be to my grave, not my bridal.

"ISABEL ST. LEGER."

When Mordaunt had read this letter, which, in spite of its incoherence, his fears readily explained, he rose hastily; his eye rested upon a sober-looking man, clad in brown. The proud love no spectators to their emotions.

"Who are you, sir?" said Algernon, quickly.

"Morris Brown," replied the stranger, coolly and civilly. "Brought that letter to you, sir; shall be very happy to serve you with any thing else; just fitted out a young gentleman as ambassador, a nephew to Mrs. Minden—very old friend of mine. Beautiful slabs you have here, sir, but they want a few nick-nacks; shall be most happy to supply you; got a lovely little ape, sir, stuffed by the late Lady Waddilove; it would look charming with this old-fashioned carving: give the room quite the air of a museum?"

"And so," said Mordaunt, for whose ear the eloquence of Mr. Brown contained only one sentence, "and so you brought this note, and will take back my answer?"

"Yes, sir; anything to keep up family connections—I knew a Lady Morden very well—very well indeed, sir—a relation of yours, I presume, by the similarity of the name; made her many valuable presents; shall be most happy to do the same to you, when you are married, sir. You will refurnish the house, I suppose? Let me see—fine proportions to this room, sir—about thirty-six feet by twenty-eight; I'll do the thing twenty per cent. cheaper than the trade; and touching the lovely little—"

"Here," interrupted Mordaunt, "you will take back this note, and be sure that Miss Isabel St. Leger has it as soon as possible; oblige me by accepting this trifle—a trifle indeed compared with my gratitude, if this note reaches its destination safely."

"I am sure," said Mr. Brown, looking with surprise at the gift, which he held with no unwilling hand, "I am sure, sir, that you are very generous, and strongly remind me of your relation, Lady Morden; and if you would like the lovely little ape as a present—I mean *really* a present—you shall have it, Mr. Mordaunt."

But Mr. Mordaunt had left the room, and the sober Morris, looking round, and cooling in his generosity, said to himself, "It is well he did not hear me, however; but I hope he will marry the nice young lady, for I love doing a kindness. This house must be re-furnished—no lady will like these old-fashioned chairs."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Squire and fool are the same thing here.—FARQUHAR.

In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And, with an unthrift love, did run from Venice.
—SHAKSPEARE.

THE persecutions which Isabel had undergone had indeed preyed upon her reason as well as her health; and, in her brief intervals of respite from the rage of the uncle, the insults of the aunt, and, worse than all, the addresses of the intended bridegroom, her mind, shocked and unhinged, reverted with such intensity to the sufferings she endured as to give her musings the character of insanity. It was in one of these moments that she had written to Mordaunt; and had the contest continued much longer the reason of the unfortunate and persecuted girl would have totally deserted her.

She was a person of acute, and even poignant, sensibilities, and these the imperfect nature of her education had but little served to guide or to correct; but as her habits were pure and good, the impulses which spring from habit were also sinless and exalted, and, if they erred, "they leant on virtue's side," and partook rather of a romantic and excessive generosity than of the weakness of *womanhood* or the selfishness of passion. All the misery and debasement of her equivocal and dependent situation had not been able to drive her into compliance with Mordaunt's passionate and urgent prayers; and her heart was proof even to the eloquence of love, when that eloquence pointed towards the worldly injury and depreciation of her lover: but this new persecution was utterly unforeseen in its nature and intoler-

able from its cause. To marry another—to be torn for ever from one in whom her whole heart was wrapped—to be forced not only to forego his love, but to feel that the very thought of him was a crime; all this, backed by the vehement and galling insults of her relations, and the sullen and unmoved meanness of her intended bridegroom, who answered her candor and confession with a stubborn indifference and renewed overtures, made a load of evil which could neither be borne with resignation nor contemplated with patience.

She was sitting, after she had sent her letter, with her two relations, for they seldom trusted her out of their sight, when Mr. Glumford was announced. Now, Mr. George Glumford was a country gentleman of what might be termed a third-rate family in the county: he possessed about twelve hundred a year, to say nothing of the odd pounds, shillings, and pence, which, however, did not meet with such contempt in his memory or estimation; was of a race which could date as far back as Charles the Second; had been educated at a country school with sixty others, chiefly inferior to himself in rank; and had received the last finish at a very small hall at Oxford. In addition to these advantages, he had been indebted to nature for a person five feet eight inches high, and stout in proportion; for hair very short, very straight, and of a red hue, which even through powder cast out a mellow glow; for an obstinate dogged sort of nose, beginning in snub, and ending in bottle; for cold, small, gray eyes, a very small mouth, pinched up and avaricious; and very large, very freckled, yet rather white hands, the nails of which were punctiliously cut into a point every other day, with a pair of scissors which Mr. Glumford often boasted had been in his possession since his eighth year; viz., for about thirty-two legitimate revolutions of the sun.

He was one of those persons who are equally close and adventurous; who love the *eclat* of a little speculation, but take exceeding good care that it should be, in their own graceful phrase, "on the safe side of the hedge." In pursuance of this characteristic of mind, he had resolved to fall in love with Miss Isabel St. Leger; for she being very dependent, he could boast to her of his disinterestedness, and hope that she would be economical through a principle of gratitude; and being the nearest relation to the opulent General St. Leger, and his unmarried sister, there seemed to be every rational probability of her inheriting the bulk of their fortunes. Upon these hints of prudence spake Mr. George Glumford.

Now, when Isabel, partly in her ingenuous frankness, partly from the passionate promptings of her despair, revealed to him her attachment to another, and her resolution never, with her own consent, to become his, it seemed to the slow, but not uncalculating, mind of Mr. Glumford not by any means desirable that he should forego his present intentions, but by all means desirable that he should make this reluctance of Isabel's an excuse for sounding the intentions and increasing the posthumous liberality of the East Indian and his sister.

"The girl is of my nearest blood," said the major-general, "and if I don't leave my fortune to her, who the devil should I leave it to, sir?" and so saying, the speaker, who was in a fell paroxysm of the gout, looked so fiercely at the hinting wooer, that Mr. George Glumford, who was no Achilles, was somewhat frightened, and thought it expedient to hint no more.

"My brother," said Miss Diana, "is so odd; but he is the most generous of men: besides, the girl has claims upon him."

Upon these speeches, Mr. Glumford thought himself secure, and inly resolving to punish the fool for her sulkiness and bad taste, as soon as he lawfully could, he continued his daily visits, and told his sporting acquaintance that his time was coming.

Revenons à nos moutons, forgive this preliminary detail, and let us return to Mr. Glumford himself, whom we left at the door, pulling and fumbling at the glove which covered his right hand, in order to present the naked palm to Miss Diana St. Leger. After this act was performed, he approached Isabel, and drawing his chair near to her, proceeded to converse with her as the Ogre did with Puss in Boots; viz. "as civilly as an Ogre could do."

This penance had not proceeded far, before the door was again opened, and Mr. Morris Brown presented himself to the conclave.

"Your servant, General; your servant, Madam. I took the liberty of coming back again, Madam, because I forgot to show you some very fine silks, the most extraordinary bargain in the world—quite presents; and I have a

Sevres bowl here, a superb article, from the cabinet of the late Lady Waddilove."

Now Mr. Brown was a very old acquaintance of Miss Diana St. Leger, for there is a certain class of old maids with whom our fair readers are no doubt acquainted, who join to a great love of expense a great love of bargains, and who never pnrchase at the regular price if they can find any *ir*regular vendor. They are great friends of Jews and itinerants, hand-in-glove with smugglers, Ladies Bountiful to pedlars, are diligent readers of puffs and advertisements, and eternal haunters of sales and auctions. Of this class was Miss Diana a most prominent individual; judge, then, how acceptable to her was the acquaintance of Mr. Brown. That indefatigable merchant of miscellanies had, indeed, at a time when brokers were perhaps rather more rare and respectable than now, a numerous country acquaintance, and thrice a year he performed a sort of circuit to all his customers and connections; hence his visit to St. Leger House, and hence Isabel's opportunity of conveying her epistle.

"Pray," said Mr. Glumford, who had heard much of Mr. Brown's 'presents' from Miss Diana—"pray don't you furnish rooms, and *things of that sort?*"

"Certainly, sir, certainly, in the best manner possible."

"Oh! very well, I shall want some rooms furnished soon; a bed-room, and a dressing-room; and things of that sort, you know. And so—perhaps you may have something in your box that will suit me, gloves or handkerchiefs, or shirts, or things of that sort."

"Yes, sir, everything, I sell everything," said Mr. Brown, opening his box.—"I beg pardon, Miss Isabel, I have dropt my handkerchief by your chair; allow me to stoop," and Mr. Brown, stooping under the table, managed to effect his purpose; unseen by the rest, a note was slipped into Isabel's hand, and, under pretence of stopping too, she managed to secure the treasure. Love need well be honest if, even when it is most true, it leads us into so much that it is false!

Mr. Brown's box was now unfolded before the eyes of the crafty Mr. Glumford, who, having selected three pair of gloves, offered the exact half of the sum demanded.

Mr. Brown lifted up his hands and eyes.

"You see," said the imperturbable Glumford, "that if you let me have them for that, and they last me well, and don't come unsewn, and stand cleaning, you'll have my custom in furnishing the house, and rooms, and—things of that sort."

Struck with the grandeur of this opening Mr. Brown yielded, and the gloves were bought.

"The fool!" thought the noble George, laughing in his sleeve, "as if I should ever furnish the house from his box!"

Strange that some men should be proud of being mean.

The moment Isabel escaped to dress for dinner, she opened her lover's note. It was as follows:

"Be in *the* room, your retreat, at nine this evening. Let the window be left unclosed. Precisely at that hour I will be with you. I shall have every thing in readiness for your flight. Be sure, dearest Isabel, that nothing prevents your meeting me there, even if all your house follow or attend you. I will bear you from all. Oh, Isabel! in spite of the mystery and wretchedness of your letter, I feel too happy, too blest at the thought that our fates will be at length united, and that the union is at hand. Remember nine.

"A. M."

Love is a feeling which has so little to do with the world, a passion so little regulated by the known laws of our more steady and settled emotions, that the thoughts which it produces are always more or less connected with exaggeration and romance. To the secret spirit of enterprise which, however chilled by his pursuits and habits, still burned within Mordaunt's breast, there was a wild pleasure in the thought of bearing off his mistress and his bride from the very home and hold of her false friends and real foes; while in the contradictions of the same passion, Isabel, so far from exulting at her approaching escape, trembled at her danger, and blushed for her temerity; and the fear and the modesty of woman almost triumphed over her brief energy and fluctuating resolve.

CHAPTER XXVII.

We haste—the chosen and the lovely bringing;
Love still goes with her from her place of birth;
Deep, silent joy, within her soul is springing,
Though in her glance the light no more is mirth.
—MRS. HEMANS.

"DAMN it!" said the general.

"The vile creature!" cried Miss Diana.

"I don't understand things of that sort," ejaculated the bewildered Mr. Glumford.

"She has certainly gone," said the valiant general.

"Certainly!" grunted Miss Diana.

"Gone!" echoed the bridegroom *not* to be.

And she was gone! never did more loving and tender heart forsake all, and cling to a more loyal and generous nature. The skies were darkened with clouds,

And the dim stars rushed through them rare and fast;

and the winds wailed with a loud and ominous voice; and the moon came forth, with a faint and sickly smile, from her chamber in the mist, and then shrunk back, and was seen no more; but neither omen nor fear was upon Mordaunt's breast, as it swelled beneath the dark locks of Isabel, which were pressed against it.

As Faith clings the more to the cross of life, while the wastes deepen around her steps, and the adders creep forth upon her path, so love clasps that which is its hope and comfort the closer, for the desert which encompasses, and the dangers which harass its way.

They had fled to London, and Isabel had been placed with a very distant, and very poor, though very high-born relative of Algernon, till the necessary preliminaries could be passed, and the final bond knit.—Yet still the generous Isabel would have refused—despite the injury to her own fame, to have ratified an union which filled her with gloomy presentiments for Mordaunt's fate; and still Mordaunt by little and little broke down her tender scruples and self-immolating resolves, and ceased not his eloquence and his suit till the day of his nuptials was set and come.

The morning rose bright and clear—the autumn was drawing towards its close, and seemed willing to leave its last remembrance tinged with the warmth and softness of its parent summer, rather than with the stern gloom and severity of its chilling successor.

And they stood beside the altar, and their vows were exchanged. A slight tremor came over Algernon's frame, a slight shade darkened his countenance; for even in that bridal hour an icy and thrilling foreboding curdled to his heart; it passed—the ceremony was over, and Mordaunt before his blushing and weeping bride from the church. His carriage was in attendance; for, not knowing how long the home of his ancestors might be his, he was impatient to return to it. The old Countess D'Arcy, Mordaunt's relation, with whom Isabel had been staying, called them back to bless them; for, even through the coldness of old age, she was touched by the singularity of their love, and affected by their nobleness of heart. She laid her wan and shrivelled hand upon each, as she bade them farewell, and each shrunk back involuntarily, for the cold and light touch seemed like the fingers of the dead.

Fearful indeed is the vicinity of death and life—the bridal chamber and the charnel. That night the old woman died. It appeared as if Fate had set its seal upon the union it had so long forbidden, and had woven a dark thread even in the marriage-bond. At least, it tore from two hearts, over which the cloud and the blast lay couched in a "grim repose," the last shelter, which, however frail and distant, seemed left to them upon the inhospitable earth!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Live while ye may, yet happy pair: enjoy
Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed.
—MILTON.

THE autumn and the winter passed away; Mordaunt's relation continued implacable. Algernon grieved for this, independent of worldly circumstances; for, though he had seldom seen that relation, yet he loved him for former kindness—rather promised, to be sure, than yet shown—with the natural warmth of an affection which has but few objects. However, the old gentleman, (a very short, very fat person—very short, and very fat people, when they *are* surly, are the devil and all; for the humors of their mind, like those of their body, have something corrupt and unpurgeable in them)—wrote him one bluff, contemptuous letter, in a witty strain—for he was a bit of a humorist—disowned his connection, and very shortly afterwards died, and left all his fortune to the very Mr. Vavasour who was at law with Mordaunt, and for whom he had always openly expressed the strongest personal dislike—spite to one relation is a marvellous tie to another. Meanwhile the law-suit went on less slowly than law-suits usually do, and the final decision was very speedily to be given.

We said the autumn and the winter were gone; and it was in one of those latter days in March, when, like a hoyden girl subsiding into dawning womanhood, the rude weather mellows into a softer and tenderer month, that, by the side of a stream, overshadowed by many a brake and tree, sate two persons.

"I know not, dearest Algernon," said one, who was a female, "if this is not almost the sweetest month in the year, because it is the month of *Hope*."

"Ay, Isabel; and they did it wrong who called it harsh, and dedicated it to Mars. I exult even in the fresh winds which hardier frames than mine shrink from, and I love feeling their wild breath fan my cheek as I ride against it. I remember," continued Algernon, musingly, "that on this very day three years ago, I was travelling through Germany, alone and on horseback, and I paused, not far from Ens, on the banks of the Danube; the waters of the river were disturbed and fierce, and the winds came loud and angry against my face, dashing the spray of the waves upon me, and filling my spirit with a buoyant and glad delight; and at that time I had been indulging old dreams of poetry, and had laid my philosophy aside; and, in the inspiration of the moment, I lifted up my hand towards the quarter whence the winds came, and questioned them audibly of their birth-place, and their bourn; and, as the enthusiasm increased, I compared them to our human life, which a moment is, and then is *not;* and, proceeding from folly to folly, I asked them, as if they were the interpreters of heaven, for a type and sign of my future lot."

"And what said they?" inquired Isabel, smiling, yet smiling timidly.

"They answered not," replied Mordaunt; "but a voice within me seemed to say—'Look above!' and I raised my eyes,—but I did not see *thee*, love—so the Book of Fate lied."

"Nay, Algernon, what *did* you see?" asked Isabel, more earnestly than the question deserved.

"I saw a thin cloud, alone amidst many dense and dark ones scattered around; and as I gazed it seemed to take the likeness of a funeral procession—coffin, bearers, priest, all—as clear in the cloud as I have seen them on the earth: and I shuddered as I saw; but the winds blew the vapor onwards, and it mingled with the broader masses of cloud; and then, Isabel, the sun shone forth for a moment, and I mistook, love, when I said you were not there, for *that* sun was you; but suddenly the winds ceased, and the rain came on fast and heavy: so my romance cooled, and my fever slaked—I thought on the inn at Ens, and the blessings of a wood fire, which is lighted in a moment, and I spurred on my horse accordingly."

"It is very strange," said Isabel.

"What, love?" whispered Algernon, kissing her cheek.

"Nothing, dearest, nothing."

At that instant, the deer, which lay waving their lordly antlers to and fro beneath the avenue which sloped upward from the stream to the house, rose hurriedly and in confusion, and stood gazing, with watchful eyes, upon a man advancing towards the pair.

It was one of the servants with a letter. Isabel saw a faint change (which none else could have seen) in Mordaunt's countenance, as he recognized the writing and broke the seal. When he had read the letter, his eyes fell upon the ground, and then, with a slight start, he lifted them up, and gazed long and eagerly around. Wistfully did he drink, as it were, into his heart the beautiful and expanded scene which lay stretched on either side; the noble avenue which his forefathers had planted as a shelter to their sons, and which now, in its majestic growth and its waving boughs, seemed to say, "Lo! ye are repaid!" and the never silent and silver stream, by which his boyhood had sat for hours, lulled by its music, and inhaling the fragrance of the reed and wild flower that decoyed the bee to its glossy banks; and the deer, to whose melancholy *belling* he had listened so often in the gray twilight with a rapt and dreaming ear; and the green fern waving on the gentle hill, from whose shade his young feet had startled the hare and the infant fawn; and far and faintly gleaming through the thick trees, which clasped it as with a girdle, the old Hall, so associated with vague hopes and musing dreams, and the dim legends of gone time, and the lofty prejudices of ancestral pride; all seemed to sink within him, as he gazed, like the last looks of departing friends; and when Isabel, who had not dared to break a silence which partook so strongly of gloom, at length laid her hand upon his arm, and lifted her dark, deep, tender eyes to his, he said, as he drew her

towards him, and a faint and sickly smile played upon his lips—

"It is past, Isabel: henceforth we have no wealth but in each other. The cause has been decided—and—and—we are beggars!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

We expose our life to a quotidian ague of frigid impertinences, which would make a wise man tremble to think of.—COWLEY.

WE must suppose a lapse of four years from the date of those events which concluded the last chapter; and, to recompense the reader, who, I know, has a little penchant for "High Life," even in the last century, for having hitherto shown him human beings in a state of society not wholly artificial, I beg him to picture to himself a large room, brilliantly illuminated, and crowded "with the magnates of the land." Here (some in saltatory motion, some in sedentary rest) are dispersed various groups of young ladies and attendant swains, talking upon the subject of Lord Rochester's celebrated poem, viz:—"*Nothing!*"—and, lounging around the doors, meditating, probably, upon the same subject, stand those unhappy victims of dancing daughters, denominated "Papas."

The music has ceased—the dancers have broken up, and there is a general but gentle sweep towards the refreshment room. In the crowd—having just entered—there glided a young man of an air more distinguished and somewhat more joyous than the rest.

"How do you do, Mr. Linden?" said a tall and (though somewhat *passee*) very handsome woman, blazing with diamonds; "are you just come?"

And here, by the way, I cannot resist pausing to observe, that a friend of mine, meditating a novel, submitted a part of the MS to a friendly publisher. "Sir," said the bookseller, "your book is very clever, but it wants dialogue."

"Dialogue?" cried my friend—"you mistake—it is all dialogue."

"Ay, sir, but not what *we* call dialogue; we want a little conversation in fashionable life—a little elegant chit-chat or so: and, as you must have seen so much of the *beau monde*, you could do it to the life: we must have something light, and witty, and entertaining."

"Light, witty, and entertaining!" said our poor friend; "and how the deuce then is it to be like conversation in 'fashionable life?' When the very best conversation one can get is so insufferably dull, how do you think people will be amused by reading a copy of the very worst?"

"They *are* amused, sir," said the publisher, "and works of this kind *sell!*"

"I am convinced," said my friend; for he was a man of a placid temper: he took the hint, and his book did sell!

Now this anecdote rushed into my mind after the penning of the little address of the lady in diamonds—"How do you do, Mr. Linden? Are you just come?"—and it received an additional weight from my utter inability to put into the mouth of Mr. Linden—notwithstanding my desire of representing him in the most brilliant colors—any more happy and eloquent answer than—"Only this instant!"

However, as this is in the true spirit of elegant dialogue, I trust my readers find it as light, witty, and entertaining as, according to the said publisher, the said dialogue is always found by the public.

While Clarence was engaged in talking with this lady, a very pretty, lively, animated girl, with laughing blue eyes, which, joined to the dazzling fairness of her complexion, gave a Hebe-like youth to her features and expression, was led up to the said lady by a tall young man, and consigned, with the ceremonious bow of the *vieille çour*, to her protection.

"Ah, Mr. Linden," cried the young lady, "I am very glad to see you—such a beautiful ball!—Everybody here that I most like. Have you had any refreshments, mamma? But I need not ask, for I am sure you have not; do come, Mr. Linden will be our cavalier."

"Well, Flora, as you please," said the elder lady, with a proud and fond look at her beautiful daughter; and they proceeded to the refreshment room.

No sooner were they seated at one of the tables, than they were accosted by Lord St. George, a nobleman whom Clarence, before he left England, had met more than once at Mr. Talbot's.

"London," said his lordship, to her of the diamonds, "has not seemed like the same place since Lady Westborough arrived; your

presence brings out all the other luminaries: and therefore a young acquaintance of mine —God bless me, there he is, seated by Lady Flora—very justly called you 'the evening star.'"

"Was that Mr. Linden's pretty saying?" said Lady Westborough, smiling.

"It was," answered Lord St. George; "and, by the bye, he is a very sensible, pleasant person, and greatly improved since he left England last."

"What!" said Lady Westborough, in a low tone (for Clarence, though in earnest conversation with Lady Flora, was within hearing), and making room for Lord St. George beside her, "What! did *you* know him before he went to ——? You can probably tell me, then, who—that is to say—what family he is exactly of—the Lindens of Devonshire, or—or—"

"Why, really," said Lord St. George, a little confused, for no man likes to be acquainted with persons whose pedigree he cannot explain, "I don't know what may be his family: I met him at Talbot's four or five years ago; he was then a mere boy, but he struck me as being very clever, and Talbot since told me that he was a nephew of his own."

"Talbot," said Lady Westborough, musingly, "what Talbot?"

"Oh! *the* Talbot—the *ci-devant jeune homme!*"

"What, that charming, clever, animated old gentleman, who used to dress so oddly, and had been so celebrated a *beau garçon* in his day?"

"Exactly so," said Lord St. George, taking snuff, and delighted to find he had set his young acquaintance on so honorable a footing.

"I did not know he was still alive," said Lady Westborough; and then, turning her eyes towards Clarence and her daughter, she added carelessly, "Mr. Talbot is very rich, is he not?"

"Rich as Crœsus," replied Lord St. George, with a sigh.

"And Mr. Linden is his heir, I suppose!"

"In all probability," answered Lord St. George; "though I believe I can boast a distant relationship to Talbot. However, I could not make him fully understand it the other day, though I took particular pains to explain it."

While this conversation was going on between the Marchioness of Westborough and Lord St. George, a dialogue equally interesting to the parties concerned, and, I hope, equally light, witty, and entertaining to readers in general, was sustained between Clarence and Lady Flora.

"How long shall you stay in England?" asked the latter, looking down.

"I have not yet been able to decide," replied Clarence, "for it rests with the ministers, not me. Directly Lord Aspeden obtains another appointment, I am promised the office of Secretary of Legation; but till then, I am—

> A captive in Augusta's towers
> To beauty and her train."

"Oh!" cried Lady Flora, laughing, "you mean Mrs. Desborough and her train: see where they sweep! Pray go and render her homage."

"It *is* rendered," said Linden in a low voice, "without so long a pilgrimage, but perhaps despised."

Lady Flora's laugh was hushed; the deepest blushes suffused her cheeks, and the whole character of that face, before so playful and joyous, seemed changed, as by a spell, into a grave, subdued, and even timid look.

Linden resumed, and his voice scarcely rose above a *whisper*.—A whisper! O delicate and fairy sound! music that speaketh to the heart, as if loth to break the spell that binds it while it listens! Sigh breathed into words, and freighting love in tones languid, like homeward bees, by the very sweets with which they are charged!

"Do you remember," said he, "that evening at —— when we last parted? and the boldness which at that time you were gentle enough to forgive?"

Lady Flora replied not.

"And do you remember," continued Clarence, "that I told you that it was not as an unknown and obscure adventurer that I would *claim* the hand of her whose heart, *as* an adventurer, I had won?"

Lady Flora raised her eyes for one moment, and encountering the ardent gaze of Clarence, as instantly dropped them.

"The time is not *yet* come," said Linden, "for the fulfilment of this promise; but may I —dare I hope, that when it does I shall not be——"

"Flora, my love," said Lady Westborough, let me introduce to you Lord Borodaile."

Lady Flora turned—the spell was broken; and the lovers were instantly transformed into ordinary mortals. But, as Flora, after returning Lord Borodaile's address, glanced her eye towards Clarence, she was struck with the sudden and singular change of his countenance; the flush of youth and passion was fled, his complexion was deadily pale, and his eyes were fixed with a searching and unaccountable meaning upon the face of the young nobleman, who was alternately addressing, with a quiet and somewhat haughty fluency, the beautiful mother, and the more lovely, though less commanding daughter. Directly Linden perceived that he was observed, he rose, turned away, and was soon lost among the crowd.

Lord Borodaile, the son and heir of the powerful Earl of Ulswater, was about the age of thirty, small, slight, and rather handsome than otherwise, though his complexion was dark and sallow; and a very aquiline nose gave a stern and somewhat severe air to his countenance. He had been for several years abroad, in various parts of the continent, and (no other field for an adventurous and fierce spirit presenting itself) had served with the gallant Earl of Effingham, in the war between the Turks and Russians, as a volunteer in the armies of the latter. In this service he had been highly distinguished for courage and conduct; and, on his return to England about a twelvemonth since, had obtained the command of a cavalry regiment. Passionately fond of his profession, he entered into its minutest duties with a zeal not exceeded by the youngest and poorest subaltern in the army.

His manners were very cold, haughty, collected, and self-possessed, and his conversation that of a man who has cultivated his intellect, rather in the world than the closet. I mean, that, perfectly ignorant of things, he was driven to converse solely upon persons, and, having imbibed no other philosophy than that which worldly deceits and disappointments bestow, his remarks, though shrewd, were bitterly sarcastic, and partook of all the ill-nature for which a very scanty knowledge of the world gives a sour and malevolent mind so ready an excuse.

"How very disagreeable Lord Borodaile is!" said Lady Flora, when the object of the remark turned away, and rejoined some idlers of his corps.

"Disagreeable!" said Lady Westborough. "I think him charming; he is so sensible. How true his remarks on the world are!"

Thus is it always: the young judge harshly of those who undeceive or revolt their enthusiasm; and the more advanced in years, who have not learned by a diviner wisdom, to look upon the human follies and errors by which they have suffered, with a pitying and lenient eye, consider every maxim of severity on those frailties as the proof of a superior knowledge, and praise that as a profundity of thought which in reality is but an infirmity of temper.

Clarence is now engaged in a *minuet de la cour*, with the beautiful Countess of ——, the best dancer of the day in England. Lady Flora is flirting with half a dozen *beaux*, the more violently in proportion as she observes the animation with which Clarence converses, and the grace with which his partner moves; and, having thus left our two principal personages occupied and engaged, let us turn for a moment to a room which we have not entered.

This is a forlorn, deserted chamber, destined to cards, which are never played in this temple of Terpsichore. At the far end of this room, opposite to the fire-place, are seated four men, engaged in earnest conversation.

The tallest of these was Lord Quintown, a nobleman, remarkable at that day for his personal advantages, his good fortune with the *beau sexe*, his attempts at parliamentary eloquence, in which he was lamentably unsuccessful, and his adherence to Lord North. Next to him sat Mr. St. George, the younger brother of Lord St. George, a gentleman to whom power and place seemed married without hope of divorce, for, whatever had been the changes of ministry for the last twelve years, he, secure in a lucrative, though subordinate situation, had "smiled at the whirlwind, and defied the storm," and, while all things shifted and vanished round him, like clouds and vapors, had remained fixed and stationary as a star. "Solid St. George," was his appellative by his friends, and his enemies did not grudge him the title. The third was the minister for ——; and the fourth was Clarence's friend, Lord Aspeden. Now this nobleman, blessed with a benevolent, smooth, calm countenance, valued himself es-

pecially upon his diplomatic elegance in turning a compliment.

Having a great taste for literature as well as diplomacy, this respected and respectable peer also possessed a curious felicity for applying quotation; and nothing rejoiced him so much as when, in the same phrase, he was enabled to set the two jewels of his courtliness of flattery and his profundity of erudition. Unhappily enough, his compliments were seldom as well taken as they were meant; and, whether from the ingratitude of the persons complimented, or the ill-fortune of the noble adulator, seemed sometimes to produce indignation in place of delight. It has been said that his civilities had cost Lord Aspeden four duels and one beating; but these reports were probably the malicious invention of these who had never tasted the delicacies of his flattery.

Now these four persons being all members of the Privy Council, and being thus engaged in close and earnest conference, were, you will suppose, employed in discussing the gravities and secrets of state—no such thing: that whisper from Lord Quintown, the handsome nobleman, to Mr. St. George is no hoarded and valuable information which would rejoice the heart of the editor of an opposition paper, no direful murmur, "perplexing monarchs with the dread of change;" it is only a recent piece of scandal, touching the virtue of a lady of the court, which (albeit the sage listener seems to pay so devout an attention to the news) is far more interesting to the gallant and handsome informant than to his brother statesman; and that emphatic and vehement tone with which Lord Aspeden is assuring the minister for —— of some fact, is merely an angry denunciation of the chicanery practised at the last Newmarket.

"By the bye, Aspeden," said Lord Quintown, "who is that good-looking fellow always flirting with Lady Flora Ardenne—an *attache* of yours, is he not?"

"Oh! Linden, I suppose you mean. A very sensible, clever young fellow, who has a great genius for business, and plays the flute admirably. I must have him for my secretary, my dear lord, mind that."

"With such a recommendation, Lord Aspeden," said the minister, with a bow, "the state would be a great loser did it not elect your *attaché*, who plays so admirably on the flute, to the office of your secretary. Let us join the dancers."

"I shall go and talk with Count B——," quoth Mr. St. George.

"And I shall make my court to his beautiful wife," said the minister, sauntering into the ball-room, to which his fine person and graceful manner were much better adapted than was his genius to the cabinet, or his eloquence to the senate.

The morning had long dawned, and Clarence, for whose mind pleasure was more fatiguing than business, lingered near the door, to catch one last look of Lady Flora before he retired. He saw her leaning on the arm of Lord Borodaile, and, hastening to join the dancers, with her usual light step and laughing air; for Clarence's short conference with her had, in spite of his subsequent flirtations, rendered her happier than she had ever felt before. Again a change passed over Clarence's countenance—a change which I find it difficult to express without borrowing from those celebrated German dramatists who could portray in such exact colors "a look of mingled joy, sorrow, hope, passion, rapture, and despair," for the look was not that of jealousy alone, although it certainly partook of its nature, but a little also of interest, and a little of sorrow; and when he turned away, and slowly descended the stairs, his eyes were full of tears, and his thoughts far—far away;—whither?

CHAPTER XXX.

Quæ fert adolescentia
Ea ne me celet consuefeci filium.*—TERENT.

THE next morning Clarence was lounging over his breakfast, and glancing listlessly now at the pages of the newspapers, now at the various engagements for the week, which lay confusedly upon his table, when he received a note from Talbot, requesting to see him as soon as possible.

"Had it not been for that man," said Clarence to himself, "what should I have been now? But, at least, I have not disgraced his friendship. I have already ascended the rough-

* The things which youth proposes I accustomed my son, that he should never conceal from me.

est, because the lowest, steps on the hill where Fortune builds her temple. I have already won for the name I have chosen some 'golden opinions,' to gild its obscurity. One year more may confirm my destiny, and ripen hope into success: then—then, I may perhaps throw off a disguise that, while it befriended, has not degraded me, and avow myself to *her!* Yet how much better to dignify the name I have assumed, than to owe respect only to that which I have not been deemed worthy to inherit. Well, well, these are bitter thoughts; let me turn to others. How beautiful Flora looked last night! and, *he—he*—but enough of this: I must dress, and then to Talbot."

Muttering these wayward fancies, Clarence rose, completed his toilet, sent for his horses, and repaired to a village about seven miles from London, where Talbot, having yielded to Clarence's fears and solicitations, and left his former insecure tenement, now resided under the guard and care of an especial and private watchman.

It was a pretty, quiet villa, surrounded by a plantation and pleasure ground of some extent for a suburban residence, in which the old philosopher (for though, in some respects, still frail and prejudiced, Talbot deserved that name) held his home. The ancient servant, on whom four years had passed lightly and favoringly, opened the door to Clarence, with his usual smile of greeting, and familiar, yet respectful, salutation, and ushered our hero into a room, furnished with the usual fastidious and rather feminine luxury which characterized Talbot's tastes. Sitting with his back turned to the light, in a large easy chair, Clarence found the wreck of the once gallant, gay Lothario.

There was not much alteration in his countenance since we last saw him; the lines, it is true, were a little more decided, and the cheeks a little more sunken, but the dark eye beamed with all its wonted vivacity, and the delicate contour of the mouth preserved all its physiognomical characteristics of the inward man. He rose with somewhat more difficulty than he was formerly wont to do, and his limbs had lost much of their symmetrical proportions; yet the kind clasp of his hand was as firm and warm as when it had pressed that of the boyish *attache* four years since; and the voice, which expressed his salutation, yet breathed its unconquered suavity and distinctness of modulation. After the customary greetings and inquiries were given and returned, the young man drew his chair near to Talbot's, and said—

"You sent for me, dear sir; have you anything more important than usual to impart to me!—or—and I hope *this* is the case—have you at last thought of any commission, however trifling, in the execution of which I can be of use?"

"Yes, Clarence, I wish your judgment to select me some strawberries—you know that I am a great epicure in fruit—and get me the new work Dr. Johnson has just published. There, are you contented? And now, tell me all about your horse, does he step well? Has he the true English head and shoulder? Are his legs fine, yet strong? Is he full of spirit and devoid of vice?"

"He is all this, sir, thanks to you for him."

"Ah?" cried Talbot—

> "Old as I am, for riding feats unfit,
> The shape of horses I remember yet.

—And now let us hear how you like Ranelagh? and above all how you liked the ball last night?"

And the vivacious old man listened with the profoundest appearance of interest to all the particulars of Clarence's animated detail. His vanity, which made him wish to be loved, had long since taught him the surest method of becoming so; and with him, every visitor, old, young, the man of books, or the disciple of the world, was sure to find the readiest and even eagerest sympathy in every amusement or occupation. But for Clarence, this interest lay deeper than in the surface of courtly breeding. Gratitude had first bound to him his adopted son, then a tie, yet unexplained, and lastly, but not least, the pride of protection. He was vain of the personal and mental attractions of his *protege*, and eager for the success of one whose honors would reflect credit on himself.

But there was one part of Clarence's account of the last night to which the philosopher paid a still deeper attention, and on which he was more minute in his advice; what this was, I cannot, as yet, reveal to the Reader.

The conversation then turned on light and general matters. The scandal, the literature, the politics, the *on dits* of the day; and lastly

upon women; thence Talbot dropped into his office of Mentor.

"A celebrated cardinal said, very wisely, that few ever did anything among men until women were no longer an object to them. That is the reason, by-the-bye, why I never succeeded with the former, and why people seldom acquire any reputation, except for a hat, or a horse, till they marry. Look round at the various occupations of life. How few bachelors are eminent in any of them! So you see, Clarence, you will have my leave to marry Lady Flora as soon as you please."

Clarence colored, and rose to depart. Talbot followed him to the door, and then said, in a careless way, "By-the-bye, I had almost forgotten to tell you that, as you have now many new expenses, you will find the yearly sum you have hitherto received doubled. To give you this information is the chief reason why I sent for you this morning. God bless you, my dear boy."

And Talbot shut the door, despite his politeness, in the face and thanks of his adopted son.

CHAPTER XXXI.

There is a great difference between seeking to raise a laugh from everything, and seeking in everything, what justly may be laughed at.—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

BEHOLD our hero, now in the zenith of distinguished dissipations! Courteous, attentive, and animated, the women did not esteem him the less for admiring them rather than himself; while, by the gravity of his demeanor to men—the eloquent, yet unpretending flow of his conversation, whenever topics of intellectual interest were discussed—the plain and solid sense which he threw into his remarks—and the avidity with which he courted the society of all distinguished for literary or political eminence, he was silently, but surely, establishing himself in esteem as well as popularity, and laying the certain foundation of future honor and success.

Thus, although he had only been four months returned to England, he was already known and courted in every circle, and universally spoken of as among "the most rising young gentlemen" whom fortune and the administration had marked for their own. His history, during the four years in which we have lost sight of him, is briefly told.

He soon won his way into the good graces of Lord Aspeden; became his private secretary, and occasionally his confidant. Universally admired for his attraction of form and manner, and, though aiming at reputation, not averse to pleasure, he had that position which fashion confers at the Court of ——, when Lady Westborough and her beautiful daughter, then only seventeen, came to ——, in the progress of a continental tour, about a year before his return to England. Clarence and Lady Flora were naturally brought much together in the restricted circle of a small court, and intimacy soon ripened into attachment.

Lord Aspeden being recalled, Clarence accompanied him to England; and the ex-minister, really liking much one who was so useful to him, had faithfully promised to procure him the office and honor of Secretary whenever his lordship should be reappointed Minister.

Three intimate acquaintances had Clarence Linden. The one was the Honorable Henry Trollolop, the second Mr. Callythorpe, and the third Sir Christopher Findlater. We will sketch them to you in an instant. Mr. Trollolop was a short, stout gentleman, with a very thoughtful countenance,—that is to say, he wore spectacles, and took snuff. Mr. Trollolop—we delight in pronouncing that soft liquid name—was eminently distinguished by a love of metaphysics—metaphysics were in a great measure the order of the day; but fate had endowed Mr. Trollolop with a singular and felicitous confusion of idea. Reid, Berkeley, Cudworth, Hobbes, all lay jumbled together in most edifying chaos at the bottom of Mr. Trollolop's capacious mind; and whenever he opened his mouth, the imprisoned enemies came rushing and scrambling out, overturning and contradicting each other, in a manner quite astounding to the ignorant spectator. Mr. Callythorpe was meagre, thin, sharp, and yellow. Whether from having a great propensity for nailing stray acquaintances, or being particularly heavy company, or from any other cause better known to the wits of the period than to us, he was occasionally termed by his friends the "yellow hammer." The peculiar characteristics of this gentleman were his sincerity and friendship. These qualities led him into say-

ing things the most disagreeable, with the civilest and coolest manner in the world—always prefacing them with "You know, my dear so and so, *I* am your true friend." If this proof of amity was now and then productive of altercation, Mr. Callythorpe, who was a great patriot, had another and a nobler plea—"Sir," he would say, putting his hand to his heart—"Sir, I'm an Englishman—I know not what it is to feign." Of a very different stamp was Sir Christopher Findlater. Little cared he for the subtleties of the human mind, and not much more for the disagreeable duties of "an Englishman." Honest and jovial—red in the cheeks—empty in the head—born to twelve thousand a year—educated in the country, and heir to an earldom, Sir Christopher Findlater piqued himself, notwithstanding his worldly advantages, usually so destructive to the kindlier affections, on having the best heart in the world, and this good heart, having a very bad head to regulate and support it, was the perpetual cause of error to the owner and evil to the public.

One evening, when Clarence was alone in his rooms, Mr. Trollolop entered.

"My dear Linden," said the visitor, "how are you?"

"I am, as I hope you are, very well," answered Clarence.

"The human mind," said Trollolop, taking off his great coat—

"Sir Christopher Findlater, and Mr. Callythorpe, sir," said the valet.

"Pshaw! What has Sir Christopher Findlater to do with the human mind?" muttered Mr. Trollolop.

Sir Christopher entered with a swagger and a laugh. "Well, old fellow, how do you do? Deuced cold this evening."

"Though it *is* an evening in May," observed Clarence; "but then, this cursed climate."

"Climate!" interrupted Mr. Callythorpe, "it is the best climate in the world: I am an Englishman, and I never abuse my country.

England, with all thy faults, I love thee still!"

"As to climate," said Trollolop, "there is no climate, neither here nor elsewhere: the climate is in your mind, the chair is in your mind, and the table too, though I dare say you are stupid enough to think the two latter are in the room; the human mind, my dear Findlater——"

"Don't *mind* me, Trollolop," cried the baronet, "I can't bear your clever heads; give me a good heart—that's worth all the heads in the world, d—n me if it is not! Eh, Linden!"

"Your good heart," cried Trollolop, in a passion—(for all your self-called philosophers are a little choleric)—your good heart is all cant and nonsense—there is no heart at all—we are all mind."

"I'll be hanged if I'm all mind," said the baronet.

"At least," quoth Linden, gravely, "no one ever accused you of it before."

"We are all mind," pursued the reasoner; "we are all mind, *un moulin à raisonnement.* Our ideas are derived from two sources, sensation or memory. That neither our thoughts, nor passions, nor ideas formed by the imagination, exist without the mind, everybody will allow;* therefore, you see, the human mind is—in short, there is nothing *in* the world but the human mind!"

"Nothing could be better demonstrated," said Clarence.

"I don't believe it," quoth the baronet.

"But you do believe it, and you must believe it," cried Trollolop; "for 'the Supreme Being has implanted within us the principle of credulity,' and therefore you do believe it."

"But I don't," cried Sir Christopher.

"You are mistaken," replied the metaphysician, calmly; "because I *must* speak truth."

"Why must you, pray?" said the baronet.

"Because," answered Trollolop, taking snuff, "there is a principle of veracity implanted in our nature."

"I wish I were a metaphysician," said Clarence, with a sigh.

"I am glad to hear you say so, for you know, my dear Linden," said Callythorpe, "that I am your true friend, and I must therefore tell you that you are shamefully ignorant. You are not offended?"

"Not at all!" said Clarence, trying to smile.

"And you, my dear Findlater" (turning to the baronet), "you know that I wish you well—you know that I never flatter, I'm your real friend, so you must not be angry; but you really are not considered a Solomon."

* Berkeley; Sect. iii. Principles of Human Knowledge.

"Mr. Callythorpe!" exclaimed the baronet, in a rage (the best-hearted people can't always bear truth), "what do you mean!"

"You must not be angry, my good sir—you must not, really. I can't help telling you of your faults, for I am a true Briton, sir, a true Briton, and leave lying to slaves and Frenchmen."

"You are in an error," said Trollolop; "Frenchmen don't lie, at least not naturally, for in the human mind, as I before said, the Divine Author has implanted a principle of veracity which——"

"My dear sir," interrupted Callythorpe, very affectionately, "you remind me of what people say of *you*."

"Memory may be reduced to sensation, since it is only a weaker sensation," quoth Trollolop; "but proceed."

"You know, Trollolop," said Callythorpe, in a singularly endearing intonation of voice, "you know that I never flatter: flattery is unbecoming a true friend—nay, more, it is unbecoming a native of our happy isles, and people do say of you that you know nothing whatsoever, no, not an iota, of all that nonsensical, worthless philosophy of which you are always talking. Lord St. George said the other day 'that you were very conceited'—'No, not conceited,' replied Dr. ——, 'only ignorant,' so if I were you, Trollolop, I would cut metaphysics—you're not offended?"

"By no means," cried Trollolop, foaming at the mouth.

"For my part," said the good-hearted Sir Christopher, whose wrath had now subsided, rubbing his hands—"for my part, I see no good in any of those things: I never read—never—and I don't see how I'm a bit the worse for it. A good man, Linden, in my opinion, only wants to do his duty, and that is very easily done."

"A good man!—and what is good?" cried the metaphysician, triumphantly. "Is it implanted within us? Hobbes, according to Reid, who is our last, and consequently best, philosopher, endeavors to demonstrate that there is no difference between right and wrong."

"I have no idea of what you mean," cried Sir Christopher.

"Idea!" exclaimed the pious philosopher. "Sir, give me leave to tell you that no solid proof has ever been advanced of the existence of ideas; they are a mere fiction and hypothesis. Nay, sir, 'hence arises that scepticism which disgraces our philosophy of the mind.' Ideas!—Findlater, you are a sceptic and an idealist."

"I?" cried the affrighted baronet; "upon my honor I am no such thing. Everybody knows that I am a Christian, and——"

"Ah!" interrupted Callythorpe, with a solemn look, "everybody knows that you are not one of those horrid persons—those atrocious deists, and atheists, and sceptics, from whom the church and freedom of old England have suffered such danger. I am a true Briton of the good old school; and I confess, Mr. Trollolop, that I do not like to hear any opinions but the right ones."

"Right ones, being only those which Mr. Callythorpe professes," said Clarence.

"Exactly so!" rejoined Mr. Callythorpe.

"The human mind," commenced Mr. Trollolop, stirring the fire; when Clarence, who began to be somewhat tired of this conversation, rose.—"You will excuse me," said he, "but I am particularly engaged, and it is time to dress. Harrison will get you tea, or whatever else you are inclined for."

"The human mind," renewed Trollolop, not heeding the interruption; and Clarence forthwith left the room.

CHAPTER XXXII.

You blame Marcius for being proud.—*Coriolanus.*

Here is another fellow, a marvellous pretty hand at fashioning a compliment.—*The Tanner of Tyburn.*

THERE was a brilliant ball at Lady T——'s, a personage who, every one knows, did, in the year 17—, give the best balls, and have the best-dressed people at them, in London. It was about half-past twelve, when Clarence, released from his three friends, arrived at the countess's. When he entered, the first thing which struck him was Lord Borodaile in close conversation with Lady Flora.

Clarence paused for a few moments, and then, sauntering towards them, caught Flora's eye—colored, and advanced. Now, if there was a haughty man in Europe, it was Lord Borodaile. He was not proud of his birth, nor fortune, but he was proud of himself; and,

next to that pride, he was proud of being a gentleman. He had an exceeding horror of all common people; a Claverhouse-sort of supreme contempt to "puddle blood;" his lip seemed to wear scorn as a garment; a lofty and stern self-admiration, rather than self-love, sat upon his forehead as on a throne. He had, as it were, an awe of himself; his thoughts were so many mirrors of Viscount Borodaile, dressed *en dieu*. His mind was a little Versailles, in which *self* sate like Louis XIV., and saw nothing but pictures of *its* self, sometimes as Jupiter, and sometimes as Apollo. What marvel, then, that Lord Borodaile was a very unpleasant companion: for every human being he had "something of contempt." His eye was always eloquent in disdaining: to the plebeian it said—"You are not a gentleman;" to the prince—"You are not Lord Borodaile."

Yet, with all this, he had his good points. He was brave as a lion; strictly honorable; and though very ignorant, and very self-sufficient, had that sort of dogged good sense which one very often finds in men of stern hearts, who, if they have any prejudices, have little feeling to overcome.

Very stiffly, and very haughtily, did Lord Borodaile draw up, when Clarence approached, and addressed Lady Flora; much more stiffly, and much more haughtily, did he return, though with old-fashioned precision of courtesy, Clarence's bow, when Lady Westborough introduced them to each other. Not that this hauteur was intended as a particular affront; it was only the agreeability of his lordship's *general* manner.

"Are you engaged?" said Clarence to Flora.

"I am, at present, to Lord Borodaile."

"After him, may I hope?"

Lady Flora nodded assent, and disappeared with Lord Borodaile.

His Royal Highness the Duke of —— came up to Lady Westborough; and Clarence, with a smiling countenance and an absent heart, plunged into the crowd. There he met Lord Aspeden, in conversation with the Earl of Holdenworth, one of the administration.

"Ah, Linden!" said the diplomatist, "let me introduce you to Lord Holdenworth—a clever young man, my dear lord, and plays the flute beautifully." With this eulogium, Lord Aspeden glided away; and Lord Holdenworth, after some conversation with Linden, honored him by an invitation to dinner the next day.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

'Tis true his nature may with faults abound;
But who will cavil when *the heart* is sound?
—STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.*—HOR.

THE next day Sir Christopher Findlater called on Clarence. "Let us lounge into the park," said he.

"With pleasure," replied Clarence; and into the park they lounged.

By the way they met a crowd, who were hurrying a man to prison. The good-hearted Sir Christopher stopped: "Who is that poor fellow?" said he.

"It is the celebrated"—(in England all criminals are celebrated. Thurtell was a hero, Thistlewood a patriot, and Fauntleroy was discovered to be exactly like Buonaparte!)—"it is the celebrated robber, John Jefferies, who broke into Mrs. Wilson's house, and cut the throats of herself and her husband, wounded the maid servant, and split the child's skull with the poker."

Clarence pressed forward:—"I have seen that man before," thought he. He looked again, and recognized the face of the robber who had escaped from Talbot's house, on the eventful night which had made Clarence's fortune. It was a strongly-marked and rather handsome countenance, which would not be easily forgotten; and a single circumstance of excitement will stamp features on the memory as deeply as the common-place intercourse of years.

"John Jefferies!" exclaimed the baronet, "let us come away."

"Linden," continued Sir Christopher, "that fellow was my servant once. He robbed me to some considerable extent. I caught him. He appealed to my heart, and you know, my dear fellow, that was irresistible, so I let him off. Who could have thought he would have turned out so?" And the baronet proceeded

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* The foolish while avoiding vice run into the opposite extremes.

to eulogize his own good nature, by which it is just necessary to remark that one miscreant had been saved for a few years from transportation, in order to rob and murder *ad libitum*, and, having fulfilled the office of a common pest, to suffer on the gallows at last. What a fine thing it is to have a good heart!

Both our gentlemen now sunk into a reverie, from which they were awakened, at the entrance of the park, by a young man in rags, who, with a piteous tone, supplicated charity. Clarence, who, to his honor be it spoken, spent an allotted and considerable part of his income in judicious and laborious benevolence, had read a little of political morals, then beginning to be understood, and walked on. The good-hearted baronet put his hand in his pocket, and gave the beggar half a guinea, by which a young, strong man, who had only just commenced the trade, was confirmed in his imposition for the rest of his life; and, instead of the useful support, became the pernicious incumbrance, of society.

Sir Christopher had now recovered his spirits. —"What's like a good action?" said he to Clarence, with a swelling breast.

The park was crowded to excess; our loungers were joined by Lord St. George. His lordship was a staunch Tory. He could not endure Wilkes, liberty, or general education. He launched out against the enlightenment of domestics.*

"What has made you so bitter?" said Sir Christopher.

"My valet," cried Lord St. George,—"he has invented a new toasting fork, is going to take out a patent, make his fortune, *and leave me;* that's what I call ingratitude, Sir Christopher; for I ordered his wages to be raised five pounds but last year."

"It *was* very ungrateful," said the ironical Clarence.

"Very!" reiterated the good-hearted Sir Christopher.

"You cannot recommend me a valet, Findlater," renewed his lordship, "a good, honest, sensible fellow, who can neither read nor write?"

"N—o—o—that is to say, yes! I can; my old servant Collard, is out of place, and is as ignorant as—as—"

"I—or you are?" said Lord St. George, with a laugh.

"Precisely," replied the baronet.

"Well, then, I take your recommendation: send him to me to-morrow at twelve."

"I will," said Sir Christopher.

"My dear Findlater," cried Clarence, when Lord St. George was gone, "did you not tell me, some time ago, that Collard was a great rascal, and very intimate with Jefferies? and now you recommend him to Lord St. George!"

"Hush, hush, hush!" said the baronet; "he was a great rogue to be sure; but poor fellow he came to me yesterday with tears in his eyes, and said he should starve if I would not give him a character; so what could I do?"

"At least, tell Lord St. George the truth," observed Clarence.

"But then Lord St. George would not take him!" rejoined the good hearted Sir Christopher, with forcible *naivete.* "No, no, Linden, we must not be so hard-hearted; we must forgive and forget;" and so saying, the baronet threw out his chest, with the conscious exultation of a man who has uttered a noble sentiment. The moral of this little history is that Lord St. George, having been pillaged "through thick and thin," as the proverb has it, for two years, at last missed a gold watch, and Monsieur Collard finished his career, as his exemplary tutor, Mr. John Jefferies, had done before him. Ah! what a fine thing it is to have a good heart.

But to return. Just as our wanderers had arrived at the farther end of the park, Lady Westborough and her daughter passed them. Clarence, excusing himself to his friend, hastened towards them, and was soon occupied in saying the prettiest things in the world to the prettiest person, at least in his eyes; while Sir Christopher, having done as much mischief as a good heart well can do in a walk of an hour, returned home to write a long letter to his mother, against "learning and all such nonsense, which only served to blunt the affections and harden the heart."

"Admirable young man!" cried the mother,

* The ancestors of our present footmen, if we may believe Sir William Temple, seem to have been to the full as intellectual as their descendants. "I have had," observes the philosophic statesman, "several servants far gone in divinity, others in poetry; have known in the families of some friends, a keeper deep in the Rosicrucian mysteries, and a laundress firm in those of Epicurus."

with tears in her eyes. "A good heart is better than all the heads in the world."

Amen—

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Make way, Sir Geoffrey Peveril, or you will compel me to do that I may be sorry for!"

"You shall make no way here but at your peril," said Sir Geoffrey; "this is my ground."—*Peveril of the Peak.*

One night on returning home from a party at Lady Westborough's in Hanover Square, Clarence observed a man before him walking with an uneven and agitated step. His right hand was clenched, and he frequently raised it as with a sudden impulse, and struck fiercely as if at some imagined enemy.

The stranger slackened his pace. Clarence passed him, and, turning round to satisfy the idle curiosity which the man's eccentric gestures had provoked, his eye met a dark, lowering, iron countenance, which, despite the lapse of four years, he recognized on the moment—it was Wolfe, the republican.

Clarence moved, involuntarily, with a quicker step; but in a few minutes, Wolfe, who was vehemently talking to himself, once more passed him: the direction he took was also Clarence's way homeward, and he therefore followed the republican, though at some slight distance, and on the opposite side of the way. A gentleman on foot, apparently returning from a party, met Wolfe, and, with an air, half haughty, half unconscious, took the wall; though, according to old-fashioned rules of street courtesy, he was on the wrong side for asserting the claim. The stern republican started, drew himself up to his full height, and sturdily and doggedly placed himself directly in the way of the unjust claimant. Clarence was now nearly opposite to the two, and saw all that was going on.

With a motion, a little rude and very contemptuous, the passenger attempted to put Wolfe aside, and win his path. Little did he know of the unyielding nature he had to do with; the next instant the republican, with a strong hand, forced him from the pavement into the very kennel, and silently and coldly continued his way.

The wrath of the discomfited passenger was vehemently kindled.

"Insolent dog!" cried he, in a loud and arrogant tone, "your baseness is your protection." Wolfe turned rapidly, and made but two strides before he was once more by the side of his defeated opponent.

"What did you say?" he asked, in his low, deep, hoarse voice.

Clarence stopped. "There will be mischief done here," thought he, as he called to mind the stern temper of the republican.

"Merely," said the other, struggling with his rage, "that it is not for men of my rank to avenge the insults offered us by those of yours!"

"Your rank," said Wolfe, bitterly retorting the contempt of the stranger, in a tone of the loftiest disdain; "your rank, poor changeling! And what are you, that you should lord it over me? Are your limbs stronger? your muscles firmer? your proportions juster? your mind acuter? your conscience clearer? Fool—fool—go home, and measure yourself with lackies!"

The republican ceased, and pushing the stranger aside, turned slowly away. But this last insult enraged the passenger beyond all prudence. Before Wolfe had proceeded two paces, he muttered a desperate, but brief oath, and struck the reformer with a strength so much beyond what his figure (which was small and slight) appeared to possess, that the powerful and gaunt frame of Wolfe recoiled backward several steps, and, had it not been for the iron railing of the neighboring area, would have fallen to the ground.

Clarence pressed forward; the face of the rash aggressor was turned towards him; the features were Lord Borodaile's. He had scarcely time to make this discovery, before Wolfe had recovered himself. With a wild and savage cry, rather than exclamation, he threw himself upon his antagonist, twined his sinewy arms round the frame of the struggling, but powerless, nobleman, raised him in the air, with the easy strength of a man lifting a child, held him aloft for one moment, with a bitter and scornful laugh of wrathful derision, and then dashed him to the ground, and, planting his foot upon Borodaile's breast, said—

"So shall it be with all of you: there shall be but one instant between your last offence and your first but final debasement. Lie there! it

is your proper place! By the only law which you yourself acknowledge, the law which gives the right divine to the strongest; if you stir limb or muscle, I will crush the breath from your body."

But Clarence was now by the side of Wolfe, a new and more powerful opponent.

"Look you," said he: "you have received an insult, and you have done justice yourself. I condemn the offence, and quarrel not with you for the punishment; but that punishment is now past: remove your foot, or—"

"What?" shouted Wolfe, fiercely, his lurid and vindictive eye flashing with the released fire of long-pent and cherished passions.

"Or," answered Clarence, calmly, "I will hinder you from committing murder."

At that instant the watchman's voice was heard, and the night's guardian himself was seen hastening from the far end of the street towards the place of contest. Whether this circumstance, or Clarence's answer, somewhat changed the current of the republican's thoughts, or whether his anger, suddenly raised, was now as suddenly subsiding, it is not easy to decide; but he slowly and deliberately moved his foot from the breast of his baffled foe, and, bending down, seemed endeavoring to ascertain the mischief he had done. Lord Borodaile was perfectly insensible.

"You have killed him!" cried Clarence, in a voice of horror, "but you shall not escape;" and he placed a desperate and nervous hand on the republican.

"Stand off," said Wolfe, "my blood is up! I would not do more violence to-night than I have done. Stand off! the man moves; see!"

And Lord Borodaile, uttering a long sigh, and attempting to rise, Clarence released his hold of the republican, and bent down to assist the fallen nobleman. Meanwhile, Wolfe, muttering to himself, turned from the spot, and strode haughtily away.

The watchman now came up, and, with his aid, Clarence raised Lord Borodaile. Bruised, stunned, half insensible as he was, that personage lost none of his characteristic stateliness; he shook off the watchman's arm, as if there was contamination in the touch; and his countenance, still menacing and defying in its expression, turned abruptly towards Clarence, as if he yet expected to meet, and struggle with, a foe.

"How are you, my lord?" said Linden; "not severely hurt, I trust?"

"Well, quite well," cried Borodaile. "Mr. Linden, I think?—I thank you cordially for your assistance; but the dog—the rascal—where is he?"

"Gone," said Clarence.

"Gone! Where—where?" cried Borodaile; "that living man should insult me, and yet escape!"

"Which way did the fellow go?" said the watchman, anticipative of half-a-crown. "I will run after him in a trice, your honor—*I* warrant I nab him."

"No—no—" said Borodaile, haughtily; "I leave my quarrels to no man; if I could not master him myself, no one else shall do it for me. Mr. Linden, excuse me, but I am perfectly recovered, and can walk very well without your polite assistance. Mr. Watchman, I am obliged to you: there is a guinea to reward your trouble."

With these words, intended as a farewell, the proud patrician, smothering his pain, bowed with extreme courtesy to Clarence — again thanked him, and walked on unaided, and alone.

"He is a game blood," said the watchman, pocketing the guinea.

"He is worthy his name," thought Clarence; "though he was in the wrong, my heart yearns to him."

CHAPTER XXXV.

Things wear a vizard which I think to like not.
—*Tanner of Tyburn.*

CLARENCE, from that night, appeared to have formed a sudden attachment to Lord Borodaile. He took every opportunity of cultivating his intimacy, and invariably treated him with a degree of consideration which his knowledge of the world told him was well calculated to gain the good will of his haughty and arrogant acquaintance; but all this was ineffectual in conquering Borodaile's coldness and reserve. To have been once seen in a humiliating and degrading situation is quite sufficient to make a proud man hate the spectator, and, with the confusion of all prejudiced minds, to transfer the sore remembrance of the event to the

association of the witness. Lord Borodaile, though always ceremoniously civil, was immovably distant; and avoided, as well as he was able, Clarence's insinuating approaches and address. To add to his indisposition to increase his acquaintance with Linden, a friend of his, a captain in the Guards, once asked him who that Mr. Linden was? and, on his lordship's replying that he did not know, Mr. Percy Bobus, the son of a wine-merchant, though the nephew of a duke, rejoined, "Nobody *does* know."

"Insolent intruder!" thought Lord Borodaile: "A man whom nobody knows to make such advances to *me!*"

A still greater cause of dislike to Clarence arose from jealousy. Ever since the first night of his acquaintance with Lady Flora, Lord Borodaile had paid her unceasing attention. In good earnest, he was greatly struck by her beauty, and had for the last year meditated the necessity of presenting the world with a Lady Borodaile. Now, though his lordship did look upon himself in as favorable a light as a man well can do, yet he could not but own that Clarence *was* very handsome—had a devilish gentlemanlike air—talked with a better grace than the generality of young men, and danced to perfection. "I detest that fellow!" said Lord Borodaile, involuntarily and aloud, as these unwilling truths forced themselves upon his mind.

"Whom do you detest?" asked Mr. Percy Bobus, who was lying on the sofa in Lord Borodaile's drawing-room, and admiring a pair of red-heeled shoes which decorated his feet.

"That puppy, Linden!" said Lord Borodaile, adjusting his cravat.

"He *is* a deuced puppy, certainly!" rejoined Mr. Percy Bobus, turning round in order to contemplate more exactly the shape of his right shoe. "I can't bear conceit, Borodaile."

"Nor I—I abhor it—it is so d—d disgusting!" replied Lord Borodaile, leaning his chin upon his two hands, and looking full into the glass. "Do you use MacNeile's divine pomatum?"

"No, it's too hard; I get mine from Paris: shall I send you some?"

"Do," said Lord Borodaile.

"Mr. Linden, my lord," said the servant, throwing open the door; and Clarence entered.

"I am very fortunate," said he, with that smile which so few ever resisted, "to find you at home, Lord Borodaile; but as the day was wet, I thought I should have some chance of that pleasure; I therefore wrapped myself up in my roquelaure, and here I am?"

Now, nothing could be more diplomatic than the compliment of choosing a wet day for a visit, and exposing one's-self to "the pitiless shower," for the greater probability of finding the person visited at home. Not so thought Lord Borodaile; he drew himself up, bowed very solemnly, and said, with cold gravity,

"You are very obliging, *Mr.* Linden."

Clarence colored, and bit his lip as he seated himself. Mr. Percy Bobus, with true insular breeding, took up the newspaper.

"I think I saw you at Lady C.'s last night," said Clarence; "did you stay there long?"

"No, indeed," answered Borodaile; "I hate her parties."

"One *does* meet such odd people there," observed Mr. Percy Bobus; "creatures one never sees anywhere else."

"I hear," said Clarence, who never abused any one, even the givers of stupid parties, if he could help it, and therefore thought it best to change the conversation—"I hear, Lord Borodaile, that some hunters of yours are to be sold. I purpose being a bidder for Thunderbolt."

"I have a horse to sell you, Mr. Linden," cried Mr. Percy Bobus, springing from the sofa into civility; "a superb creature."

"Thank you," said Clarence, laughing; "but I can only afford to buy *one*, and I have taken a great fancy to Thunderbolt."

Lord Brodaile, whose manners were very antiquated in their affability, bowed. Mr. Bobus sank back into his sofa, and resumed the paper.

A pause ensued. Clarence was chilled in spite of himself. Lord Borodaile played with a paper-cutter.

"Have you been to Lady Westborough's lately?" said Clarence, breaking silence.

"I was there last night," replied Lord Borodaile.

"Indeed!" cried Clarence. "I wonder I did not see you there, for I dined with them."

Lord Borodaile's hair curled of itself. "*He* dined there, and I only asked in the evening,"

thought he; but his sarcastic temper suggested a very different reply.

"Ah," said he, elevating his eyebrows, "Lady Westborough told me she had had some people to dinner, whom she had been *obliged* to ask. Bobus, is that the 'Public Advertiser?' See whether that d—d fellow Junius has been writing any more of his venomous letters."

Clarence was not a man apt to take offence, but he felt his bile rise: "it will not do to show it," thought he; so he made some further remark in a jesting vein; and, after a very ill-sustained conversation of some minutes longer, rose, apparently in the best humor possible, and departed, with a solemn intention never again to enter the house. Thence he went to Lady Westborough's.

The marchioness was in her boudoir; Clarence was, as usual, admitted, for Lady Westborough loved amusement above all things in the world, and Clarence had the art of affording it better than any young man of her acquaintance. On entering, he saw Lady Flora hastily retreating through an opposite door. She turned her face towards him for one moment—that moment was sufficient to freeze his blood: the large tears were rolling down her cheeks, which were as white as death, and the expression of those features, usually so laughing and joyous, was that of utter and ineffable despair.

Lady Westborough was as lively, as bland, and as agreeable as ever; but Clarence thought he detected something restrained and embarrassed lurking beneath all the graces of her exterior manner; and the single glance he had caught of the pale and altered face of Lady Flora was not calculated to re-assure his mind or animate his spirits. His visit was short; when he left the room, he lingered for a few moments in the ante-chamber, in the hope of again seeing Lady Flora. While thus loitering, his ear caught the sound of Lady Westborough's voice: "When Mr. Linden calls again, you have my orders never to admit him into this room; he will be shown into the drawing-room."

With a hasty step and a burning cheek Clarence quitted the house, and hurried, first to his solitary apartments, and thence, impatient of loneliness, to the peaceful retreat of his benefactor.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A maiden's thoughts do check my trembling hand.
—DRAYTON.

THERE is something very delightful in turning from the unquietness and agitation, the fever, the ambition, the harsh and worldly realities of man's character to the gentle and deep recesses of woman's more secret heart. Within her musings is a realm of haunted and fairy thought, to which the things of this turbid and troubled life have no entrance. What to her are the changes of state, the rivalries and contentions which form the staple of *our* existence? For her there is an intense and fond philosophy, before whose eye substances flit and fade like shadows, and shadows grow glowingly into truth. Her soul's creations are not as the moving and mortal images seen in the common day: they are things, like spirits steeped in the dim moonlight, heard when all else are still, and busy when earth's laborers are at rest! They are

Such stuff
As dreams are made of, and their little life
Is rounded by a sleep.

Here is the real and uncentred *poetry of being*, which pervades and surrounds her as with an air, which peoples her visions and animates her love, which shrinks from earth into itself, and finds marvel and meditation in all that it beholds within, and which spreads even over the heaven in whose faith she so ardently believes, the mystery and the tenderness of romance.

LETTER I.

FROM LADY FLORA ARDENNE TO MISS ELEANOR TREVANION.

"You say that I have not written to you so punctually of late as I used to do before I came to London, and you impute my negligence to the gaieties and pleasures by which I am surrounded. *Eh bien!* my dear Eleanor, could you have thought of a better excuse for me? You know how fond *we*—ay, dearest, you as well as I—used to be of dancing, and how earnestly we were wont to anticipate those children's balls at my uncle's, which were the only ones we were ever permitted to attend. I found a stick the other day, on which I had cut seven notches, significant of seven days more to the next ball—we reckoned time by balls then, and danced chronologically. Well, my dear Eleanor, here I am now, brought out, tolerably well-behaved, only not dignified enough, according to mamma—as fond of laughing, talking, and dancing as ever; and yet, do you know, a ball, though still very delightful, is far from being the most important event in creation;

its anticipation does not keep me awake of a night; and, what is more to the purpose, its recollection does not make me lock up my writing-desk, burn my *portefeuille*, and forget you, all of which you seem to imagine it has been able to effect.

"No, dearest Eleanor, you are mistaken; for were she twice as giddy, and ten times as volatile as she is, your own Flora could never never forget you, nor the happy hours we have spent together, nor the pretty goldfinches we had in common, nor the little Scotch duets we used to sing together, nor our longings to change them into Italian, nor our disappointment when we did so, nor our laughter at Signior Shrikalini, nor our tears when poor darling Bijou died. And do you remember, dearest, the charming green lawn where we used to play together, and plan tricks for your governess? She was very, very cross; though, I think, we were a little to blame, too. However, I was much the worst! And pray, Eleanor, don't you remember how we used to like being called pretty, and told of the conquests we should make! Do you like all that now? For my part, I am tired of it, at least from the generality of one's flatterers.

"Ah! Eleanor, or 'heigho!' as the young ladies in novels write, do you remember how jealous I was of you at ——, and how spiteful I was, and how you were an angel and bore with me, and kissed me, and told me that—that I had nothing to fear? Well, Clar—, I mean Mr. Linden, is now in town, and so popular, and so admired! I wish we were at —— again, for there we saw him every day, and now we don't meet more than three times a week; and though I like hearing him praised above all things, yet I feel very uncomfortable when that praise comes from very, very pretty women. I wish we were at —— again! Mamma, who is looking more beautiful than ever, is very kind! she says nothing, to be sure, but she must see how—that is to say—she must know that—that I—I mean that Clarence is very attentive to me, and that I blush and look exceedingly silly whenever he is; and therefore I suppose that whenever Clarence thinks fit to ask me, I shall not be under the necessity of getting up at six o'clock, and travelling to Grentna Green, through that odious North-road, up the Highgate-hill, and over Finchley-common.

"'But when will he ask you?' My dearest Eleanor, that is more than I can say. To tell you the truth, there is something about Linden which I cannot thoroughly understand. They say he is nephew and heir to the Mr. Talbot, whom you may have heard papa talk of; but if so, why the hints, the insinuations, of not being what he seems, which Clarence perpetually throws out, and which only excite my interest without gratifying my curiosity? 'It is not,' he has said, more than once, 'as an obscure adventurer that I will claim your love:' and if I venture, which is very seldom (for I am a little afraid of him), to question his meaning, he either sinks into utter silence, for which, if I had loved *according to book*, and not so naturally, I should be very angry with him, or twists his words into another signification, such as that he would not claim me till he had become something higher and nobler than he is now. Alas, my dear Eleanor, it takes a long time to make an ambassador out of an *attache*.

"See now if you reproached me justly with scanty correspondences. If I write a line more, I must begin a new sheet, and that will be beyond the power of a frank—a thing which would, I know, break the heart of your dear, good, generous, but a little too prudent aunt, and irrevocably ruin me in her esteem. So God bless you, dearest Eleanor, and believe me most affectionately yours,

"FLORA ARDENNE."

LETTER II.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Pray, dearest Eleanor, does that good aunt of yours—now, don't frown, I am not going to speak disrespectfully of her—ever take a liking to young gentlemen whom you detest, and insist upon the fallacy of your opinion, and the unerring rectitude of hers? If so, you can pity and comprehend my grief. Mamma has formed quite an attachment to a very disagreeable person! He is Lord Borodaile, the eldest, and, I believe, the only son of Lord Ulswater. Perhaps you may have met him abroad, for he has been a great traveller; his family is among the most ancient in England, and his father's estate covers half a county. All this mamma tells me, with the most earnest air in the world, whenever I declaim upon his impertinence or *disagreeability*—(is there such a word? there ought to be). 'Well,' said I to-day, 'what's that to me?' 'It may be a great deal to you,' replied mamma, significantly, and the blood rushed from my face to my heart. She could not, Eleanor, she could not mean, after all her kindness to Clarence, and in spite of all her penetration into my heart—oh, no, no—she could not. How terribly suspicious this love makes one!

"But if I disliked Lord Borodaile at first, I have hated him of late; for, some how or other, he is always in the way. If I see Clarence hastening through the crowd to ask me to dance, at that very instant up steps Lord Borodaile with his cold, changeless face, and his haughty, old-fashioned bow, and his abominable dark complexion—and mamma smiles—and he hopes he finds me disengaged—and I am hurried off—and poor Clarence looks so disappointed and so wretched! You have no idea how ill-tempered this makes me. I could not help asking Lord Borodaile, yesterday, if he was *never* going abroad again, and the hateful creature played with his cravat, and answered 'Never!' I was in hopes that my sullenness would drive his lordship away; *tout au contraire*, 'Nothing,' said he to me the other day, when he was in full pout, 'Nothing is so plebeian as good-humor!'

"'I wish, then, Eleanor, that he could see your governess; she must be majesty itself in his eyes!

"Ah, dearest, how we belie ourselves. At this moment, when you might think, from the idle, rattling, silly flow of my letter, that my heart was as light and free as it was when we used to play on the green lawn, and under the sunny trees, in the merry days of our childhood, the tears are running down my cheeks; see where they have fallen on the page, and my head throbs as if my thoughts were too full and heavy for it to contain. It is past one! I am alone, and in my own room. Mamma is gone to a rout at H—— House; but I knew I should not meet Clarence there, and so said I was ill, and remained at home. I have done so often of late, whenever I have learned from *him* that he was not going to the same place as mamma. Indeed, I love much better to sit alone and think over his words and looks; and I have drawn, after repeated attempts, a profile likeness of him; and oh, Eleanor, I cannot tell you how dear it is to me; and yet there is not a line, not a look of his countenance which I have not learned by heart, without such useless aids to my memory.

But I am ashamed of telling you all this, and my eyes ache so, that I can write no more.

"Ever, as ever, dearest Eleanor, your affectionate friend."

LETTER III.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Eleanor, I am undone! My mother—my mother has been so cruel; but she cannot, she cannot intend it, or she knows very little of my heart. With some, ties may be as easily broken as formed; with others they are twined around life itself.

"Clarence dined with us yesterday, and was unusually animated and agreeable. He was engaged on business with Lord Aspeden afterwards, and left us early. We had a few people in the evening; Lord Borodaile among the rest; and my mother spoke of Clarence, and his relationship to, and expectations from, Mr. Talbot. Lord Borodaile sneered; 'You are mistaken,' said he, sarcastically; 'Mr. Linden may feel it convenient to give out that he is related to so old a family as the Talbots; and since Heaven only knows who or what he is, he may as well claim alliance with one person as another; but he is certainly not the nephew of Mr. Talbot of Scarsdale Park, for that gentleman had no sisters and but one brother, who left an only daughter; that daughter had also but one child, certainly no relation to Mr. Linden. I can vouch for the truth of this statement; for the Talbots are related to, or at least nearly connected with, myself; and I thank Heaven that I have a pedigree, even in its collateral branches, worth learning by heart.' And then Lord Borodaile—I little thought, when I railed against him, what serious cause I should have to hate him—turned to me, and harassed me with his tedious attentions the whole of the evening.

"This morning mamma sent for me into her boudoir. 'I have observed,' said she, with the greatest indifference, 'that Mr. Linden has, *of late*, been much too particular in his manner towards you—your foolish and undue familiarity with every one has perhaps given him encouragement. After the gross imposition which Lord Borodaile exposed to us last night, I cannot but consider the young man as a mere adventurer, and must not only insist on your putting a total termination to civilities, which we must henceforth consider presumption, but I myself shall consider it incumbent upon me greatly to limit the advances he has thought proper to make towards my acquaintance.'

"You may guess how thunderstruck I was by this speech. I could not answer; my tongue literally clove to my mouth, and I was only relieved by a sudden and violent burst of tears. Mamma looked exceedingly displeased, and was just going to speak, when the servant threw open the door and announced Mr. Linden. I rose hastily, and had only just time to escape, as he entered; but when I heard that dear, dear voice, I could not resist turning for one moment. He saw me—and was struck mute, for the agony of my soul was stamped visibly on my countenance. That moment was over—wfth a violent effort I tore myself away.

"Eleanor, I can now write no more. God bless you! and *me* too—for I am very, very unhappy.

"F. A."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

What a charming character is a kind old man.
—STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

"CHEER up, my dear boy," said Talbot, kindly, "we must never despair. What though Lady Westborough has forbidden you the *boudoir*, a *boudoir* is a very different thing from a daughter, and you have no right to suppose that the veto extends to both. But now that we are on this subject, do let me reason with you seriously. Have you not already tasted all the pleasures, and been sufficiently annoyed by some of the pains, of acting the 'Incognito?' Be ruled by me: resume your proper name; it is at least one which the proudest might acknowledge; and its discovery will remove the greatest obstacle to the success which you so ardently desire."

Clarence who was laboring under strong excitement, paused for some moments, as if to collect himself, before he replied: "I have been thrust from my father's home—I have been made the victim of another's crime—I have been denied the rights and name of son; perhaps—(and I say this bitterly) justly denied them, despite of my own innocence. What would you have me do? Resume a name never conceded to me—perhaps not righteously mine—thrust myself upon the unwilling and shrinking hands which disowned and rejected me—blazon my virtues by pretensions which I myself have promised to forego, and foist myself on the notice of strangers by the very claims which my nearest relations dispute? Never—never—never! With the simple name I have assumed—the friend I myself have won—you, my generous benefactor, my real father, who never forsook, nor insulted, me for my misfortunes—with these, I have gained some steps in the ladder; with these, and those gifts of nature, a stout heart, and a willing hand, of which none can rob me, I will either ascend the rest, even to the summit, or fall to the dust, unknown, but not contemned; unlamented, but not despised."

"Well, well," said Talbot, brushing away a tear which he could not deny to the feeling, even while he disputed the judgment, of the young adventurer—"well, this is all very fine and very foolish; but you shall never want friend or father while I live, or when I have ceased to live; but come—sit down, share my

dinner, which is not very good, and my dessert, which is: help me to entertain two or three guests who are coming to me in the evening, to talk on literature, sup, and sleep; and to-morrow you shall return home, and see Lady Flora in the drawing-room, if you cannot in the *boudoir*."

And Carence was easily persuaded to accept the invitation.

Talbot was not one of those men who are forced to exert themselves to be entertaining. He had the pleasant and easy way of imparting his great general and curious information, that a man, partly humorist, partly philosopher, who values himself on being a man of letters, and is in spite of himself a man of the world, always ought to possess. Clarence was soon beguiled from the remembrance of his mortifications, and, by little and little, entirely yielded to the airy and happy flow of Talbot's conversation.

In the evening, three or four men of literary eminence (as many as Talbot's small Tusculum would accommodate with beds) arrived, and in a conversation, free alike from the jargon of pedants and the insipidities of fashion, the night fled away swiftly and happily, even to the lover.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

We are here (in the country) among the vast and noble scenes of nature; we are there (in the town) among the pitiful shifts of policy. We walk here in the light and open ways of the divine bounty—we grope there in the dark and confused labyrinths of human malice; our senses are here feasted with all the clear and genuine taste of their objects, which are all sophisticated there, and for the most part overwhelmed with their contraries: here pleasure, methinks, looks like a beautiful, constant, and modest wife: it is there an impudent, fickle, and painted harlot.—COWLEY.

DRAW up the curtain! The scene is the Opera.

The pit is crowded; the connoisseurs in the front row are in a very ill-humor. It must be confessed, that extreme heat is a little trying to the temper of a critic.

The Opera then was not what it is now, nor even what it had been in a former time. It is somewhat amusing to find Goldsmith questioning, in one of his Essays, whether the Opera could ever become popular in England? But on the night on which the reader is summoned to that "theatre of sweet sounds," a celebrated singer from the continent made his first appearance in London, and all the world thronged to "that odious Opera-house," to hear or to say they had heard the famous Sopraniello.

With a nervous step, Clarence proceeded to Lady Westborough's box; and it was many minutes that he lingered by the door before he summoned courage to obtain admission.

He entered; the box was crowded; but Lady Flora was not there. Lord Borodaile was sitting next to Lady Westborough. As Clarence entered, Lord Borodaile raised his eyebrows, and Lady Westborough her glass. However disposed a great person may be to drop a lesser one, no one of real birth or breeding ever cuts another. Lady Westborough, therefore, though much colder, was no less civil than usual; and Lord Borodaile bowed lower than ever to *Mr.* Linden, as he punctiliously called him. But Clarence's quick eye discovered instantly that he was no welcome intruder, and that his day with the beautiful marchioness was over. His visit, consequently, was short and embarrassed. When he left the box, he heard Lord Borodaile's short, slow, sneering laugh, followed by Lady Westborough's "hush" of reproof.

His blood boiled. He hurried along the passage, with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and his hand clenched.

"What ho! Linden, my good fellow; why you look as if all the ferocity of the great Figg were in your veins," cried a good-humored voice. Clarence started, and saw the young and high spirited Duke of Haverfield.

"Are you going behind the scenes?" said his grace. "I have just come thence; and you had much better drop into La Meronville's box with me. You sup with her to-night, do you not?"

"No, indeed!" replied Clarence; "I scarcely know her, except by sight."

"Well, and what think you of her?"

"That she is the prettiest Frenchwoman I ever saw."

"Commend me to secret sympathies!" cried the duke. "She has asked me three times who you were, and told me three times that you were the handsomest man in London, and had quite a foreign air; the latter recommendation being of course far greater than the former. So, after this, you cannot refuse to

accompany me to her box, and make her acquaintance."

"Nay," answered Clarence, "I shall be too happy to profit by the taste of so discerning a person: but it is cruel in you, duke, not to feign a little jealousy—a little reluctance to introduce so formidable a rival."

"Oh, as to me," said the duke, "I only like her for her mental, not her personal attractions. She is very agreeable, and a little witty; sufficient attractions for one in her situation."

"But do tell me a little of her history," said Clarence; "for, in spite of her renown, I only know her as La belle Meronville. Is she not living *en ami* with some one of our acquaintance?"

"To be sure," replied the duke, "with Lord Borodaile. She is prodigiously extravagant; and Borodaile affects to be prodigiously fond; but as there is only a certain fund of affection in the human heart, and all Lord Borodaile's is centred *in* Lord Borodaile, that cannot really be the case."

"Is he jealous of her?" said Clarence.

"Not in the least! nor, indeed, does she give him any cause. She is very gay, very talkative, gives excellent suppers, and always has her box at the Opera crowded with admirers; but that is all. She encourages many, and favors but one. Happy Borodaile! My lot is less fortunate! You know, I suppose, that Julia has deserted me?"

"You astonish me—and for what?"

"Oh, she told me, with a vehement burst of tears, that she was convinced I did not love her, and that a hundred pounds a month was not sufficient to maintain a milliner's apprentice. I answered the first assertion by an assurance that I adored her; but I preserved a total silence with regard to the latter: and so I found Trevanion *tête-à-tête* with her the next day."

"What did you?" said Clarence.

"Sent my valet to Trevanion with an old coat of mine, my compliments, and my hopes that, as Mr. Trevanion was so fond of my cast-off conveniences, he would honor me by accepting the accompanying trifle."

"He challenged you, without doubt?"

"Challenged me! No: he tells all his friends that I am the wittiest man in Europe."

"A fool can speak the truth, you see," said Clarence, laughing.

"Thank you, Linden; you shall have my good word with La Meronville for that; *mais allons.*"

Mademoiselle *de* la Meronville, as she pointedly entitled herself, was one of those charming adventuresses, who, making the most of a good education and a prepossessing person, a delicate turn for letter-writing, and a lively vein of conversation, come to England for a year or two, as Spaniards were wont to go to Mexico, and who return to their native country with a profound contempt for the barbarians whom they have so egregiously despoiled. Mademoiselle de la Meronville was small, beautifully formed, had the prettiest hands and feet in the world, and laughed *musically.* By-the-by, how difficult it is to laugh, or even to smile, at once naturally and gracefully. It is one of Steele's finest touches of character, where he says of Will Honeycomb, "He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily."

In a word, the pretty Frenchwoman was precisely formed to turn the head of a man like Lord Borodaile, who loved to be courted and who required to be amused. Mademoiselle de la Meronville received Clarence with a great deal of grace, and a little reserve, the first chiefly natural, the last wholly artificial.

"Well," said the duke (in French), "you have not told me who are to be of your party this evening—Borodaile, I suppose, of course?"

"No, he cannot come to-night."

"*Ah, quel malheur!* then the hock will not be iced enough—Borodaile's looks are the best wine-coolers in the world."

"Fie!" cried La Meronville, glancing towards Clarence: "I cannot endure your malevolence; wit makes you very bitter."

"And that is exactly the reason why *la belle* Meronville loves me so: nothing is so sweet to one person as bitterness upon another; it is human nature and French nature (which is a very different thing) into the bargain."

"Bah! my lord duke, you judge of others by yourself."

"To be sure I do," cried the duke; "and that is the best way of forming a right judgment. Ah! what a foot that little *figurante* has—you don't admire her, Linden?"

"No, duke; my admiration is like the bird

in the cage—chained here, and cannot fly away!" answered Clarence, with a smile at the frippery of his compliment.

"Ah, Monsieur," cried the pretty Frenchwoman, leaning back, "you have been at Paris, I see—one does not learn those graces of language in England. I have been five months in your country—brought over the prettiest dresses imaginable, and have only received three compliments, and (pity me!) two out of the three were upon my pronunciation of 'How do you do?'"

"Well," said Clarence, "I should have imagined that in England, above all other countries, your vanity would have been gratified, for you know we pique ourselves on our sincerity, and say all we think."

"Yes! then you always think very unpleasantly; what an alternative! which is the best, to speak ill, or to think ill of one?"

"*Pour l'amour de Dieu*," cried the duke, "don't ask such puzzling questions; you are always getting into those moral subtleties, which I suppose you learn from Borodaile. He is a wonderful metaphysician, I hear—I can answer for his chemical powers; the moment he enters a room the very walls grow damp: as for me, I dissolve; I should flow into a fountain, like Arethusa, if happily his lordship did not freeze one again into substance as fast as he dampens one into thaw."

"*Fi donc!*" cried La Meronville. "I should be very angry, had you not taught me to be very indifferent—"

"To *him!*" said the duke, drily. "I'm glad to hear it. He is not worth *une grande passion*, believe me—but tell me, *ma belle*, who else sups with you?"

"*D'abord*, Monsieur Linden, I trust," answered La Meronville, with a look of invitation, to which Clarence bowed and smiled his assent, "Milord D——, and Mons. Trevanion, Mademoiselle Caumartin, and Le Prince Pietro del Ordino."

"Nothing can be better arranged," said the duke. "But see, they are just going to drop the curtain. Let me call your carriage."

"You are too good, milord," replied La Meronville, with a bow, which said, "of course;" and the duke, who would not have stirred three paces for the first princess of the blood, hurried out of the box (despite of Clarence's offer to undertake the commission) to inquire after the carriage of the most notorious adventuress of the day.

Clarence was alone in the box with the beautiful Frenchwoman. To say truth, Linden was far too much in love with Lady Flora, and too occupied, as to his other thoughts, with the projects of ambition to be easily led into any disreputable or criminal *liaison;* he therefore conversed with his usual ease, though with rather more than his usual gallantry, without feeling the least touched by the charms of La Meronville, or the least desirous of supplanting Lord Borodaile in her favor.

The duke re-appeared, and announced the carriage. As, with La Meronville leaning on his arm, Clarence hurried out, he accidentally looked up, and saw on the head of the stairs Lady Westborough with her party (Lord Borodaile among the rest) in waiting for her carriage. For almost the first time in his life, Clarence felt ashamed of himself; his cheek burned like fire, and he involuntarily let go the fair hand which was leaning upon his arm. However, the weaker our cause the better face we should put upon it, and Clarence, recovering his presence of mind, and vainly hoping he had not been perceived, buried his face as well as he was able in the fur collar of his cloak, and hurried on.

"You saw Lord Borodaile?" said the duke to La Meronville, as he handed her into her carriage.

"Yes, I accidentally looked back after we had passed him, and then I saw him."

"Looked back!" said the duke; "I wonder he did not turn you into a pillar of salt."

"*Fi donc!*" cried La belle Meronville, tapping his grace playfully on the arm, in order to do which *she was forced to lean* a little harder upon Clarence's, which she had not yet relinquished"—*Fi donc!—François, chez moi!*"

"My carriage is just behind," said the duke. "You will go with me to La Meronville's, of course."

"Really, my dear duke," said Clarence, "I wish I could excuse myself from this party. I have another engagement."

"Excuse yourself? and leave me to the mercy of Mademoiselle Caumartin, who has the face of an ostrich, and talks me out of breath! Never, my dear Linden, never! Besides, I want you to see how well I shall behave

to Trevanion. Here is the carriage. *Entrez, mon cher.*"

And Clarence, weakly and foolishly (but he *was* very young and very unhappy, and so, longing for an escape from his own thoughts), entered the carriage, and drove to the supper party, in order to prevent the duke of Haverfield being talked out of breath by Mademoiselle Caumartin, who had the face of an ostrich.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Yet truth is keenly sought for, and the wind,
Charged with rich words, pour'd out in thought's defence;
Whether the church inspire that eloquence,
Or a Platonic piety, confined
To the sole temple of the inward mind;
And one there is who builds immortal lays,
Though doom'd to tread in solitary ways;
Darkness before, and danger's voice behind!
Yet not alone—— —WORDSWORTH.

LONDON—thou Niobe, who sittest in stone, amidst thy stricken and fated children; nurse of the desolate, that hidest in thy bosom the shame, the sorrows, the sins of many sons; in whose arms the fallen and the outcast shroud their distresses, and shelter from the proud man's contumely; Epitome and Focus of the disparities and maddening contrasts of this wrong world, that assembles together in one great heap the woes, the joys, the elevations, the debasements of the various tribes of man; Mightiest of levellers, confounding in thy whirlpool all ranks, all minds, the graven labors of knowledge, the straws of the maniac, purple and rags, the regalities and the loathsomeness of earth—palace and lazar-house combined! Grave of the living, where, mingled and massed together, we couch, but rest not—"for in that sleep *of life* what dreams *do* come"—each vexed with a separate vision—"shadows" which "grieve the heart," unreal in their substance, but faithful in their warnings, flitting from the eye, but graving unfleeting memories on the mind, which reproduce new dreams over and over, until the phantasm ceases, and the pall of a heavier torpor falls upon the brain, and all is still, and dark, and hushed!—"From the stir of thy great Babel," and the fixed tinsel glare in which sits Pleasure like a star, "which shines, but warms not with its powerless rays," we turn to thy deeper and more secret haunts. Thy wilderness is all before us—where to choose our place of rest; and to our eyes, thy hidden recesses are revealed.

The clock of St. Paul's had tolled the second hour of morning. Within a small and humble apartment in the very heart of the city, there sat a writer, whose lucubrations, then obscure and unknown, were destined, years afterwards, to excite the vague admiration of the crowd, and the deeper homage of the wise. They were of that nature which is slow in winning its way to popular esteem; the result of the hived and hoarded knowledge of years—the produce of deep thought and sublime aspirations, influencing, in its bearings, the interests of the many, yet only capable of analysis by the judgment of the few. But the stream broke forth at last from the cavern to the daylight, although *the source* was never traced; or, to change the image—albeit none know the hand which executed, and the head which designed—the monument of a mighty intellect has been at length dug up, as it were, from the envious earth, the brighter for its past obscurity, and the more certain of immortality from the temporary neglect it has sustained.

The room was, as we before said, very small and meanly furnished; yet were there a few articles of costliness and luxury scattered about, which told that the tastes of its owner had not been quite humbled to the level of his fortunes. One side of the narrow chamber was covered with shelves, which supported books, in various languages; and though chiefly on scientific subjects, not utterly confined to them. Among the doctrines of the philosopher, and the golden rules of the moralist, were also seen the pleasant dreams of poets, the legends of Spenser, the refining moralities of Pope, the lofty errors of Lucretius, and the sublime relics of *our* "dead kings of melody." * And over the hearth was a picture, taken in more prosperous days, of one, who had been, and was yet, to the tenant of that abode, better than fretted roofs and glittering banquets, the objects of ambition, or even the immortality of fame. It was the face of one very young and beautiful, and the deep, tender eyes looked down, as with a watchful fondness, upon the

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* Shakspeare and Milton.

lucubrator and his labors. While beneath the window, which was left unclosed, for it was scarcely June, were simple, yet not inelegant, vases, filled with flowers:

> Those lovely leaves, where we
> May read how soon things have
> Their end, though ne'er so brave.*

The writer was alone, and had just paused from his employment: he was leaning his face upon one hand, in a thoughtful and earnest mood, and the air which came chill, but gentle, from the window, slightly stirred the locks from the broad and marked brow, over which they fell in thin but graceful waves. Partly owing perhaps to the waning light of the single lamp, and the lateness of the hour, his cheek seemed very pale, and the complete, though contemplative, rest of the features partook greatly of the quiet of habitual sadness, and a little of the languor of shaken health: yet the expression, despite the proud cast of the brow and profile, was rather benevolent than stern or dark in its pensiveness, and the lines spoke more of the wear and harrow of deep thought, than the inroads of ill-regulated passion.

There was a slight tap at the door,—the latch was raised, and the original of the picture I have described entered the apartment.

Time had not been idle with her since that portrait had been taken; the round elastic figure had lost much of its youth and freshness; the step, though light, was languid, and in the centre of the fair, smooth cheek, which was a little sunken, burned one deep bright spot—fatal sign to those who have watched the progress of the most deadly and deceitful of our national maladies; yet still the form and countenance were eminently interesting and lovely; and though the bloom was gone for ever, the beauty, which not even death could wholly have despoiled, remained to triumph over debility, misfortune, and disease.

She approached the student, and laid her hand upon his shoulder—

"Dearest!" said he tenderly yet reproachfully, "yet up, and the hour so late, and yourself so weak? Fie, I must learn to scold you."

"And how," answered the intruder, "how could I sleep or rest while you are consuming your very life in those thankless labors?"

"By which," interrupted the writer, with a faint smile, "we glean our scanty subsistence."

"Yes," said the wife (for she held that relation to the student), and the tears stood in her eyes, "I know well that every morsel of bread, every drop of water, is wrung from your very heart's blood, and I—I am the cause of all; but surely you exert yourself too much, more than can be requisite. These night damps, this sickly and chilling air, heavy with the rank vapors of the coming morning, are not suited to thoughts and toils which are alone sufficient to sear your mind and exhaust your strength. Come, my own love, to bed: and yet, first, come and look upon our child, how sound she sleeps! I have leant over her for the last hour, and tried to fancy it was you whom I watched, for she has learned already your smile, and has it even when she sleeps."

"She has cause to smile," said the husband, bitterly.

"She has, *for she is yours!* and even in poverty and humble hopes, that is an inheritance which may well teach her pride and joy. Come, love, the air is keen, and the damp rises to your forehead—yet stay, till I have kissed it away."

"Mine own love," said the student, as he rose and wound his arm round the slender waist of his wife, "wrap your shawl closer over your bosom, and let us look for one instant upon the night. I cannot sleep till I have slaked the fever of my blood: the air has nothing of coldness in its breath to me."

And they walked to the window, and looked forth. All was hushed and still, in the narrow street; the cold gray clouds were hurrying fast along the sky, and the stars, weak and waning in their light, gleamed forth at rare intervals upon the mute city, like the expiring watch-lamps of the dead.

They leaned out, and spoke not; but when they looked above upon the melancholy heavens, they drew nearer to each other, as if it were their natural instinct to do so, whenever the world without seemed discouraging and sad.

At length the student broke the silence; but his thoughts, which were wandering and disjointed, were breathed less to her than vaguely and unconsciously to himself. "Morn breaks—another and another!—day upon day!—while we drag on our load like the blind beast

* Herrick.

which knows not when the burden shall be cast off, and the hour of rest be come."

The woman pressed his hand to her bosom, but made no rejoinder—she knew his mood—and the student continued.

"And so life frets itself away! Four years have passed over our seclusion—four years! a great segment in the little circle of our mortality; and of those years what day has pleasure won from labor, or what night has sleep snatched wholly from the lamp? Weaker than the miser, the insatiable and restless mind traverses from east to west; and from the nooks, and corners, and crevices of earth collects, fragment by fragment, grain by grain, atom by atom, the riches which it gathers to its coffers—for what?—to starve amidst the plenty! The fantasies of the imagination bring a ready and substantial return: not so the treasures of thought. Better that I had renounced the soul's labor for that of its hardier frame—better that I had 'sweated in the eye of Phœbus,' than 'eat my heart with crosses and with cares,'—seeking truth and wanting bread—adding to the indigence of poverty its humiliation; wroth with the arrogance of men who weigh in the shallow scales of their meagre knowledge the product of lavish thought, and of the hard hours for which health, and sleep, and spirit have been exchanged;—sharing the lot of those who would enchant the old serpent of evil, which refuses the voice of the charmer!—struggling against the prejudice and bigoted delusion of the bandaged and fettered herd to whom, in our fond hopes and aspirations, we trusted to give light and freedom; seeing the slavish judgments we would have redeemed from error clashing their chains at us in ire;—made criminal by our very benevolence;—the martyrs whose zeal is rewarded with persecution, whose prophecies are crowned with contempt!—Better, oh, better that I had not listened to the vanity of a heated brain—better that I had made my home with the lark and the wild bee, among the fields and the quiet hills, where life, if obscurer, is less bebased, and hope, if less eagerly indulged, is less bitterly disappointed. The frame, it is true, might have been bowed to a harsher labor, but the heart would at least have had its rest from anxiety, and the mind its relaxation from thought."

The wife's tears fell upon the hand she clasped. The student turned, and his heart smote him for the selfishness of his complaints. He drew her closer and closer to his bosom; and, gazing fondly upon those eyes which years of indigence and care might have robbed of their young lustre, but not of their undying tenderness, he kissed away her tears, and addressed her in a voice which never failed to charm her grief into forgetfulness.

"Dearest and kindest," he said, "was I not to blame for accusing those privations or regrets which have only made us love each other the more! Trust me, mine own treasure, that it is only in the peevishness of an inconstant and fretful humor, that I have murmured against my fortune. For, in the midst of all, I look upon you, my angel, my comforter, my young dream of love, which God, in his mercy, breathed into waking life—I look upon you, and am blest and grateful. Nor in my juster moments do I accuse even the nature of these studies, though they bring us so scanty a reward. Have I not hours of secret and overflowing delight, the triumphs of gratified research—flashes of sudden light, which reward the darkness of thought, and light up my solitude as a revel?—These feelings of rapture, which nought but Science can afford, amply repay her disciples for worse evils and severer hardships than it has been my destiny to endure. Look along the sky, how the vapors struggle with the still yet feeble stars: even so have the mists of error been pierced, though not scattered, by the dim but holy lights of past wisdom; and now the morning is at hand, and in that hope we journey on, doubtful, but not utterly in darkness. Nor is this *all my* hope; there *is* a loftier and more steady comfort than that which mere philosophy can bestow. If the certainty of future fame bore Milton rejoicing through his blindness, or cheered Galileo in his dungeon, what stronger and holier support shall not be given to *him* who has loved mankind as his brothers, and devoted his labors to their cause?—who has not sought, but relinquished, his own renown?—who has braved the present censures of men for their future benefit, and trampled upon glory in the energy of benevolence? Will there not be for him something more powerful than fame to comfort his sufferings and to sustain his hopes? If the wish of mere posthumous honor be a feeling rather vain than exalted, the love of our race affords us a

more rational and noble desire of remembrance. Come what will, that love, if it animates our toils, and directs our studies, shall, when we are dust, make our relics of value, our efforts of avail, and consecrate the desire of fame, which were else a passion selfish and impure, by connecting it with the welfare of ages, and the eternal interests of the world and its Creator !—Come, we will to bed."

CHAPTER XL.

A man may be formed by nature for an admirable citizen, and yet, from the purest motives, be a dangerous one to the State in which the accident of birth has placed him.—STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

THE night again closed, and the student once more resumed his labors. The spirit of his hope and comforter of his toils sat by him, ever and anon lifting her fond eyes from her work to gaze upon his countenance, to sigh, and to return sadly and quietly to her employment.

A heavy step ascended the stairs, the door opened, and the tall figure of Wolfe, the republican, presented itself. The female rose, pushed a chair towards him with a smile and grace suited to better fortunes, and, retiring from the table, reseated herself silent and apart.

"It is a fine night," said the student, when the mutual greetings were over. "Whence come you ?"

"From contemplating human misery and worse than human degradation," replied Wolfe, slowly seating himself.

"Those words specify no place—they apply universally," said the student, with a sigh.

"Ay, Glendower, for misgovernment is universal," rejoined Wolfe.

Glendower made no answer.

"Oh !" said Wolfe, in the low, suppressed tone of intense passion which was customary to him, "it maddens me to look upon the willingness with which men hug their trappings of slavery,—bears, proud of the rags which deck, and the monkeys which ride them. But it frets me yet more when some lordling sweeps along, lifting his dull eyes above the fools whose only crime and debasement are—what ?—their subjection to *him !* Such an one I encountered a few nights since; and he will remember the meeting longer than I shall. I taught that 'god to tremble.'"

The female rose, glanced towards her husband, and silently withdrew.

Wolfe paused for a few moments, looked curiously and pryingly round, and then rising, went forth into the passage to see that no loiterer or listener was near—returned, and drawing his chair close to Glendower, fixed his dark eye upon him, and said—

"You are poor, and your spirit rises against your lot; you are just, and your heart swells against the general oppression you behold; can you not dare to remedy your ills and those of mankind ?"

"I can dare," said Glendower, calmly, though haughtily, "all things but crime."

"And which is crime ?—the rising against, or the submission to, evil government ? Which is crime, I ask you ?"

"That which is the most imprudent," answered Glendower. "We may sport in ordinary cases with our own safeties, but only in rare cases with the safety of others."

Wolfe rose, and paced the narrow room impatiently to and fro. He paused by the window, and threw it open. "Come here," he cried—"come, and look out."

Glendower did so—all was still and quiet.

"Why did you call me ?" said he; "I see nothing."

"Nothing !" exclaimed Wolfe; "look again—look on yon sordid and squalid huts—look at yon court, that from this wretched street leads to abodes to which these are as palaces: look at yon victims of vice and famine, plying beneath the midnight skies their filthy and infectious trade. Wherever you turn your eyes, what see you ? Misery, loathsomeness, sin ! Are you a man, and call you these nothing ! And now lean forth still more—see afar off, by yonder lamp, the mansion of ill-gotten and griping wealth. He who owns those buildings, what did he that he should riot while we starve ? He wrung from the negro's tears and bloody sweat the luxuries of a pampered and vitiated taste: he pandered to the excesses of the rich; he heaped their tables with the product of a nation's groans. Lo !—his reward ! He is rich—prosperous—honored ! He sits in the legislative assembly; he declaims against immorality; he contends for the safety of property, and the equilibrium of

ranks. Transport yourself from this spot for an instant—imagine that you survey the gorgeous homes of aristocracy and power—the palaces of the west. What see you there?—The few sucking, draining, exhausting the blood, the treasure, the very existence of the many. Are we, who are *of* the many, wise to suffer it?"

"Are we of the many?" said Glendower.

"We could be," said Wolfe, hastily.

"I doubt it," replied Glendower.

"Listen," said the republican, laying his hand upon Glendower's shoulder, "listen to me. There are in this country men whose spirits not years of delayed hope, wearisome persecution, and, bitterer than all, misrepresentation from some and contempt from others, have yet quelled and tamed. We watch our opportunity; the growing distress of the country, the increasing severity and misrule of the administration, will soon afford it us. Your talents, your benevolence, render you worthy to join us. Do so, and——"

"Hush!" interrupted the student; "you know not what you say: you weigh not the folly, the madness of your design! I am a man more fallen, more sunken, more disappointed than you. I, too, have had at my heart the burning and lonely hope which, through years of misfortune and want, has comforted me with the thought of serving and enlightening mankind—I, too, have devoted to the fulfilment of that hope, days and nights, in which the brain grew dizzy, and the heart heavy and clogged with the intensity of my pursuits. Were the dungeon and the scaffold my reward, Heaven knows that I would not flinch eye or hand, or abate a jot of heart and hope in the thankless prosecution of my toils. Know me, then, as one of fortunes more desperate than your own; of an ambition more unquenchable; of a philanthropy no less ardent; and, I *will* add, of a courage no less firm: and behold the utter hopelessness of your projects with others, when to me they only appear the visions of an enthusiast."

Wolfe sunk down in the chair.

"Is it even so?" said he, slowly and musingly. "Are my hopes but delusions?—Has my life been but one idle, though convulsive, dream?—Is the goddess of our religion banished from this great and populous earth, to the seared and barren hearts of a few solitary worshippers, whom all else despise as madmen or persecute as idolaters?—And if so, shall we adore her the less?—No! though we perish in her cause, it is around her altar that our corpses shall be found!"

"My friend," said Glendower, kindly, for he was touched by the sincerity, though opposed to the opinions, of the republican, "the night is yet early: we will sit down to discuss our several doctrines calmly, and in the spirit of truth and investigation."

"Away!" cried Wolfe, rising and slouching his hat over his bent and lowering brows; "away! I will not listen to you—I dread your reasonings—I would not have a particle of my faith shaken. If I err, I have erred from my birth: erred with Brutus and Tell, Hampden and Milton, and all whom the thousand tribes and parties of earth consecrate with their common gratitude and eternal reverence. In that error I will die! If our party can struggle not with hosts, there may yet arise some minister with the ambition of Cæsar, if not his genius—of whom a single dagger can rid the earth!"

"And if not?" said Glendower.

"I have the same dagger for myself!" replied Wolfe, as he closed the door.

CHAPTER XLI.

Bolingbroke has said that "Man is his own sharper and his own bubble;" and certainly he who is acutest in duping others is ever the most ingenious in outwitting himself. The criminal is always a sophist; and finds in his own reason a special pleader to twist laws human and divine into a sanction of his crime. The rogue is so much in the habit of cheating, that he packs the cards even when playing at Patience with himself. —STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

THE only two acquaintances in this populous city whom Glendower possessed, who were aware that in a former time he had known a better fortune, were Wolfe, and a person of far higher worldly estimation, of the name of Crauford. With the former the student had become acquainted by the favor of chance, which had for a short time made them lodgers in the same house. Of the particulars of Glendower's earliest history, Wolfe was utterly ignorant; but the addresses upon some old

letters, which he had accidentally seen, had informed him that Glendower had formerly borne another name; and it was easy to glean from the student's conversation that something of greater distinction and prosperity than he now enjoyed was coupled with the appellation he had renounced. Proud, melancholy, austere—brooding upon thoughts whose very loftiness received somewhat of additional grandeur from the gloom which encircled it—Glendower found, in the ruined hopes and the solitary lot of the republican, that congeniality which neither Wolfe's habits, nor the excess of his political fervor, might have afforded to a nature which philosophy had rendered moderate and early circumstances refined. Crauford was far better acquainted than Wolfe with the reverses Glendower had undergone. Many years ago, he had known, and indeed travelled with, him upon the continent; since then, they had not met till about six months prior to the time in which Glendower is presented to the reader. It was in an obscure street of the city, that Crauford had then encountered Glendower, whose haunts were so little frequented by the higher orders of society that Crauford was the first, and the only one, of his former acquaintance, with whom for years he had been brought into contact. That person recognized him at once, accosted him, followed him home, and three days afterwards surprised him with a visit. Of manners which, in their dissimulation, extended far beyond the ordinary ease and breeding of the world, Crauford readily appeared not to notice the altered circumstances of his old acquaintance; and, by a tone of conversation artfully respectful, he endeavored to remove from Glendower's mind that soreness which his knowledge of human nature told him his visit was calculated to create.

There is a certain species of pride which contradicts the ordinary symptoms of the feeling, and appears most elevated when it would be reasonable to expect it should be most depressed. Of this sort was Glendower's. When he received the guest who had known him in his former prosperity, some natural sentiment of emotion called, it is true, to his pale cheek a momentary flush, as he looked round his humble apartment, and the evident signs of poverty it contained; but his address was calm and self-possessed, and whatever mortification he might have felt, no intonation of his voice, no tell-tale embarrassment of manner, revealed it. Encouraged by this air, even while he was secretly vexed by it, and perfectly unable to do justice to the dignity of mind which gave something of majesty, rather than humiliation, to misfortune, Crauford resolved to repeat his visit, and by intervals, gradually lessening, renewed it, till acquaintance seemed, though little tinctured at least on Glendower's side by *friendship*, to assume the semblance of *intimacy*. It was true, however, that he had something to struggle against in Glendower's manner which certainly grew colder in proportion to the repetition of the visits; and, at length, Glendower said, with an ease and quiet which abashed, for a moment, an effrontery both of mind and manner, which was almost parallel—"Believe me, Mr. Crauford, I feel fully sensible of your attentions; but as circumstances at present are such as to render an intercourse between us little congenial to the habits and sentiments of either, you will probably understand and forgive my motives in wishing no longer to receive civilities, which, however I may feel them, I am unable to return."

Crauford colored, and hesitated, before he replied: "Forgive me then," said he, "for my fault. I did venture to hope that no circumstances would break off an acquaintance to me so valuable. Forgive me if I did imagine that an intercourse between mind and mind could be equally carried on, whether the mere body were lodged in a palace or a hovel;" and then suddenly changing his tone into that of affectionate warmth, Crauford continued: "My dear Glendower, my dear friend, I would say, if I durst, is not your pride rather to blame here? Believe me, in my turn, I fully comprehend and bow to it; but it wounds me beyond expression. Were you in your proper station, a station much higher than my own, I would come to you at once, and proffer my friendship—as it is, I cannot; but your pride wrongs me, Glendower—indeed it does."

And Crauford turned away, apparently in the bitterness of wounded feeling.

Glendower was touched: and his nature, as kind as it was proud, immediately smote him for conduct certainly ungracious, and perhaps ungrateful. He held out his hand to Crauford; with the most respectful warmth, that personage seized and pressed it: and from that time Crauford's visits appeared to receive a license

which, if not perfectly welcome, was at least never again questioned.

"I shall have this man now," muttered Crauford, between his ground teeth, as he left the house, and took his way to his counting-house. There, cool, bland, fawning, and weaving in his close and dark mind various speculations of guilt and craft, he sat among his bills and gold, like the very gnome and personification of that Mammon of gain to which he was the most supple, though concealed, adherent.

Richard Crauford was of a new, but not unimportant family. His father had entered into commerce, and left a flourishing firm, and a name of great respectability in his profession, to his son. That son was a man whom many and opposite qualities rendered a character of very singular and uncommon stamp. Fond of the laborious acquisition of money, he was equally attached to the ostentatious pageantries of expense. Profoundly skilled in the calculating business of his profession, he was devoted equally to the luxuries of pleasure; but the pleasure was suited well to the mind which pursued it. The divine intoxication of that love where the delicacies and purities of affection consecrate the humanity of passion, was to him a thing of which not even his youngest imagination had ever dreamed. The social concomitants of the wine cup—(which have for the lenient an excuse, for the austere a temptation)—the generous expanding of the heart—the increased yearning to kindly affection—the lavish spirit throwing off its exuberance in the thousand lights and emanations of wit—these, which have rendered the molten grape, despite of its excesses, not unworthy of the praises of immortal hymns, and taken harshness from the judgment of those averse to its enjoyment—these never presented an inducement to the stony temperament and dormant heart of Richard Crauford.

He looked upon the essences of things internal as the common eye upon outward nature, and loved the many shapes of evil as the latter does the varieties of earth, not for their graces, but their utility. His loves, coarse and low, fed their rank fires from an unmingled and gross depravity. His devotion to wine was either solitary and unseen—for he loved safety better than mirth—or in company with those whose station flattered his vanity, not whose fellowship ripened his crude and nipped affections. Even the recklessness of vice in him had the character of prudence; and, in the most rapid and turbulent stream of his excesses, one might detect the rocky and unmoved heart of the calculator at the bottom.

Cool, sagacious, profound in dissimulation, and not only observant of, but deducing sage consequences from, those human inconsistencies and frailties by which it was his aim to profit, he cloaked his deeper vices with a masterly hypocrisy—and for those too dear to forego and too difficult to conceal, he obtained pardon by the intercession of virtues it cost him nothing to assume. Regular in his attendance at worship—professing rigidness of faith, beyond the tenets of the orthodox church—subscribing to the public charities, where the common eye knoweth what the private hand giveth—methodically constant to the forms of business—primitively scrupulous in the proprieties of speech—hospitable, at least to his superiors—and, being naturally smooth, both of temper and address, popular with his inferiors—it was no marvel that one part of the world forgave, to a man rich and young, the irregularities of dissipation—that another forgot real immorality in favor of affected religion—or that the remainder allowed the most unexceptionable excellence of words to atone for the unobtrusive errors of a conduct which did not prejudice *them.*

"It is true," said his friends, "that he loves women too much; but he is young—he will marry and amend."

Mr. Crauford did *marry*—and, strange as it may seem, for love—at least for that brute-like love, of which alone he was capable. After a few years of ill-usage on his side, and endurance of his wife's, they parted. Tired of her person, and profiting by her gentleness of temper, he sent her to an obscure corner of the country, to starve upon the miserable pittance which was all he allowed her from his superfluities. Even then—such is the effect of the showy proprieties of form and word—Mr. Crauford sank not in the estimation of the world.

"It was easy to see," said the spectators of his domestic drama, "that a man in temper so mild—in his business so honorable—so civil of speech—so attentive to the stocks and the sermon—could not have been the party to blame. One never knew the rights of matrimonial disagreements, nor could sufficiently

estimate the provoking disparities of temper. Certainly Mrs. Crauford never did look in good humor, and had not the open countenance of her husband; and certainly the very excesses of Mr. Crauford betokened a generous warmth of heart, which the sullenness of his conjugal partner might easily chill and revolt."

And thus, unquestioned and unblamed, Mr. Crauford walked onward in his beaten way; and secretly laughing at the toleration of the crowd, continued at his luxurious villa, the orgies of a passionless, yet brutal, sensuality.

So far might the character of Richard Crauford find parallels in hypocrisy and its success. Dive we now deeper into his soul. Possessed of talents which, though of a secondary rank, were in that rank consummate, Mr. Crauford could not be a villain by intuition, or the irregular bias of his nature: he was a villain upon a grander scale: he was a villain upon system. Having little learning and less knowledge, out of his profession, his reflection expended itself upon apparently obvious deductions from the great and mysterious book of life. He saw vice prosperous in externals, and from this sight his conclusion was drawn. "Vice," said he, "is not an obstacle to success; and if so, it is at least a pleasanter road to it than your narrow and thorny ways of virtue." But there are certain vices which require the mask of virtue, and Crauford thought it easier to wear the mask than to school his soul to the reality. So to the villain he added the hypocrite. He found the success equalled his hopes, for he had both craft and genius: nor was he, naturally, without the minor amiabilities, which, to the ignorance of the herd, seem more valuable than coin of a more important amount. Blinded as we are by prejudice, we not only *mistake* but *prefer* decencies to moralities; and, like the inhabitants of Cos, when offered the choice of two statues of the same goddess, we choose, not that which is the most beautiful, but that which is the most dressed.

Accustomed easily to dupe mankind, Crauford soon grew to despise them; and from justifying roguery by his own interest, he now justified it by the folly of others; and as no wretch is so unredeemed as to be without excuse to himself, Crauford actually persuaded his reason that he was vicious upon principle, and a rascal on a system of morality. But why the desire of this man, so consummately worldly and heartless, for an intimacy with the impoverished and powerless student? This question is easily answered. In the first place, during Crauford's acquaintance with Glendower abroad, the latter had often, though innocently, galled the vanity and self-pride of the *parvenu* affecting the aristocrat, and in poverty the *parvenu* was anxious to retaliate. But this desire would probably have passed away after he had satisfied his curiosity, or gloated his spite, by one or two insights into Glendower's home—for Crauford, though at times a malicious, was not a vindictive, man—had it not been for a much more powerful object which afterwards occurred to him. In an extensive scheme of fraud, which for many years this man had carried on, and which for secresy and boldness was almost unequalled, it had of late become necessary to his safety to have a partner, or rather tool. A man of education, talent, and courage, was indispensable, and Crauford had resolved that Glendower should be that man. With the supreme confidence in his own powers which long success had given him—with a sovereign contempt for, or rather disbelief in, human integrity—and with a thorough conviction that the bribe to him was the bribe with all, and that none could on any account be poor if they had the offer to be rich, Crauford did not bestow a moment's consideration upon the difficulty of his task, or conceive that in the nature and mind of Glendower there could exist any obstacle to his design.

Men addicted to calculation are accustomed to suppose those employed in the same mental pursuit arrive, or ought to arrive, at the same final conclusion. Now looking upon Glendower as a philosopher, Crauford looked upon him as a man who, however he might conceal his real opinions, secretly laughed, like Crauford's self, not only at the established customs, but at the established moralities of the world. Ill-acquainted with books, the worthy Richard was, like all men similarly situated, somewhat infected by the very prejudices he affected to despise; and he shared the vulgar disposition to doubt the hearts of those who cultivate the head. Glendower himself had confirmed this opinion by lauding, though he did not entirely subscribe to, those moralists who have made an enlightened self-interest the proper measure of all human conduct; and

Crauford, utterly unable to comprehend this system in its grand, naturally interpreted it in a partial, sense. Espousing self-interest as his own code, he deemed that in reality Glendower's principles did not differ greatly from his; and as there is no pleasure to a hypocrite like that of finding a fit opportunity to unburden some of his real sentiments, Crauford was occasionally won to hold some conference and argument with the student, in which his opinions were not utterly cloaked in their usual disguise; but cautious even in his candor, he always forbore stating such opinions as his own: he merely mentioned them as those which a man, beholding the villanies and follies of his kind, might be tempted to form; and thus Glendower, though not greatly esteeming his acquaintance, looked upon him as one ignorant in his opinions but not likely to err in his conduct.

These conversations did, however, it is true, increase Crauford's estimate of Glendower's integrity, but they by no means diminished his confidence of subduing it. Honor, a deep and pure sense of the divinity of good, the steady desire of rectitude, and the supporting aid of a sincere religion—these he did not deny to his intended tool; he rather rejoiced that he possessed them. With the profound arrogance, the sense of immeasurable superiority which men of no principle invariably feel for those who have it, Crauford said to himself, "Those very virtues will be my best dupes—they cannot resist the temptations I shall offer, but they can resist any offer to betray me afterwards, for no man can resist hunger; but your fine feelings, your nice honor, your precise religion—he! he! he!—these can teach a man very well to resist a common inducement: they cannot make him submit to be his own executioner; but they can prevent his turning king's evidence, and being executioner to another. No, no—it is not to your common rogues that I may dare trust my secret—*my* secret, which is my life! It is precisely of such a fine, Athenian, moral rogue as I shall make my proud friend, that I am in want. But he has some silly scruples; we must beat them away—we must not be too rash; and above all, we must leave the best argument to poverty. Want is your finest orator;—a starving wife—a famished brat—he! he!—these are your true tempters—your true fathers of crime, and fillers of jails and gibbets. Let me see: he has no money I know, but what he gets from that bookseller. What bookseller, by-the-bye? Ah, rare thought! I'll find out, and cut off that supply. My lady wife's cheek will look somewhat thinner next month, I fancy—he! he! But 'tis a pity, for she is a glorious creature! Who knows but I may serve two purposes? However one at present! business first, and pleasure afterwards—and faith, the business is damnably like that of life and death."

Muttering such thoughts as these, Crauford took his way one evening to Glendower's house.

CHAPTER XLII.

Iago.—Virtue; a fig!—'tis in ourselves that we are thus and thus.—*Othello.*

"So—so, my little one, don't let me disturb you. Madam, dare I venture to hope your acceptance of this fruit? I chose it myself, and I am somewhat of a judge. Oh! Glendower, here is the pamphlet you wished to see."

With this salutation, Crauford drew his chair to the table by which Glendower sate, and entered into conversation with his purposed victim. A comely and a pleasing countenance had Richard Crauford! the lonely light of the room fell upon a face which, though forty years of guile had gone over it, was as fair and unwrinkled as a boy's. Small, well cut features—a blooming complexion—eyes of the lightest blue—a forehead high, though narrow, and a mouth from which the smile was never absent: these, joined to a manner at once soft and confident, and an elegant, though unaffected, study of dress, gave to Crauford a personal appearance well suited to aid the effect of his hypocritical and dissembling mind.

"Well, my friend," said he, "always at your books—eh! Ah! it is a happy taste; would that I had cultivated it more; but we who are condemned to business have little leisure to follow our own inclinations. It is only on Sundays that I have time to read; and then, (to say truth I am an old-fashioned man, whom the gayer part of the world laughs at) and then I am too occupied with the Book of Books to think of any less important study."

Not deeming that a peculiar reply was re-

quired to this pious speech, Glendower did not take that advantage of Crauford's pause which it was evidently intended that he should. With a glance towards the student's wife, our mercantile friend continued: "I did once—once, in my young dreams, intend—that whenever I married I would relinquish a profession for which, after all, I am but little calculated. I pictured to myself a country retreat, well stored with books; and having concentrated in one home all the attractions which could have tempted my thoughts abroad, I had designed to surrender myself solely to those studies which, I lament to say, were but ill attended to in my earlier education. But—but,"—(here Mr. Crauford sighed deeply, and averted his face)—"fate willed it otherwise!"

Whatever reply of sympathetic admiration or condolence Glendower might have made, was interrupted by one of those sudden and overpowering attacks of faintness which had of late seized the delicate and declining health of his wife. He rose, and leant over her with a fondness and alarm which curled the lip of his visitor.

"Thus it is," said Crauford to himself, "with weak minds, under the influence of habit. The love of lust becomes the love of custom, and the last is as strong as the first."

When she had recovered, she rose, and (with her child) retired to rest, the only restorative she ever found effectual for her complaint. Glendower went with her, and, after having seen her eyes, which swam with tears of gratitude at his love, close in the seeming slumber she affected in order to release him from his watch, he returned to Crauford. He found that gentleman leaning against the chimney-piece with folded arms, and apparently immersed in thought. A very good opportunity had Glendower's absence afforded to a man whose boast it was never to lose one. Looking over the papers on the table, he had seen and possessed himself of the address of the bookseller the student dealt with. "So much for business—now for philanthropy," said Mr. Crauford, in his favorite anithetical phrase, throwing himself in his attitude against the chimney-piece.

As Glendower entered, Crauford started from his reverie, and with a melancholy air and pensive voice, said—

"Alas, my friend, when I look upon this humble apartment, the weak health of your unequalled wife—your obscurity—your misfortunes; when I look upon these, and contrast them with your mind, your talents, all that you were born and fitted for, I cannot but feel tempted to believe with those who imagine the pursuit of virtue a chimera, and who justify their own worldly policy by the example of all their kind."

"Virtue," said Glendower, "would indeed be a chimera, did it require support from those whom you have cited."

"True—most true," answered Crauford, somewhat disconcerted in reality, though not in appearance; "and yet, strange as it may seem, I have known some of those persons very good, admirably good men. They were extremely moral and religious; they only played the great game for worldly advantages upon the same terms as the other players; nay, they never made a move in it without most fervently and sincerely praying for divine assistance."

"I readily believe you," said Glendower, who always, if possible, avoided a controversy—"the easiest person to deceive is one's own self."

"Admirably said," answered Crauford, who thought it, nevertheless, one of the most foolish observations he had ever heard: "admirably said!—and yet my heart does grieve bitterly for the trials and distresses it surveys. One must make excuses for poor human frailty; and one is often placed in such circumstances as to render it scarcely possible, without the grace of God"—(here Crauford lifted up his eyes)—"not to be urged, as it were, into the reasonings and actions of the world."

Not exactly comprehending this observation, and not very closely attending to it, Glendower merely bowed, as in assent, and Crauford continued.

"I remember a remarkable instance of this truth. One of my partner's clerks had, through misfortune or imprudence, fallen into the greatest distress. His wife, his children—(he had a numerous family)—were on the literal and absolute verge of starvation. Another clerk, taking advantage of these circumstances, communicated to the distressed man a plan for defrauding his employer. The poor fellow yielded to the temptation, and was at last discovered. I spoke to him myself, for I was in-

terested in his fate, and had always esteemed him.—'What,' said I, 'was your motive for this fraud?'—'My duty!' answered the man fervently; 'My duty! Was I to suffer my wife, my children to starve before my face, when I could save them at a little personal risk? No—my duty forbade it!'—and in truth, Glendower, there was something very plausible in this manner of putting the question."

"You might, in answering it," said Glendower, "have put the point in a manner equally plausible, and more true: was he to commit a great crime against the millions connected by social order, for the sake of serving a single family—and that his own."

"Quite right," answered Crauford: "that was just the point of view in which I did put it: but the man, who was something of a reasoner, replied, 'Public law is instituted for public happiness. Now if *mine* and my children's happiness is infinitely and immeasurably more served by this comparatively petty fraud than my employer's is advanced by my abstaining from, or injured by my committing, it, why, the origin of law itself allows me to do it.' What say you to that, Glendower? It is something in your Utilitarian, or, as you term it, Epicurean * principle; is it not?" and Crauford, shading his eyes, as if from the light, watched narrowly Glendower's countenance, while he concealed his own.

"Poor fool!" said Glendower: "the man was ignorant of the first lesson in his moral primer. Did he not know that no rule is to be applied to a peculiar instance, but extended to its most general bearings? Is it necessary even to observe that the particular consequence of fraud in this man might, it is true, be but the ridding his employer of superfluities, scarcely missed, for the relief of most urgent want in two or three individuals; but the general consequences of fraud and treachery would be the disorganization of all society? Do not think, therefore, that this man was a disciple of my, or of any, system of morality."

"It is very just, very," said Mr. Crauford, with a benevolent sigh; "but you will own that want seldom allows great nicety in moral distinctions, and that, when those whom you love most in the world are starving, you may be pitied, if not forgiven, for losing sight of the after laws of nature, and recurring to her first ordinance, self-preservation."

"We should be harsh, indeed," answered Glendower, "if we did not pity; or, even while the law condemned, if the individual did not forgive."

"So I said, so I said," cried Crauford; "and in interceding for the poor fellow, whose pardon I am happy to say I procured, I could not help declaring, that if I were placed in the same circumstances, I am not sure that my crime would not have been the same."

"No man *could* feel sure!" said Glendower, dejectedly.

Delighted and surprised with this confession, Crauford continued:—"I believe—I fear not;—thank God, *our* virtue can never be so tried; but even you, Glendower, even *you*, philosopher, moralist as you are—just, good, wise, religious—even you might be tempted, if you saw your angel wife dying for want of the aid, the very sustenance, necessary to existence, and your innocent and beautiful daughter stretch her little hands to you, and cry in the accents of famine for bread."

The student made no reply for a few moments, but averted his countenance, and then in a slow tone said, "Let us drop this subject: none know their strength till they are tried: self-confidence should accompany virtue, but not precede it."

A momentary flash broke from the usually calm, cold eye of Richard Crauford. "He is mine," thought he: "the very name of want abases his pride: what will the reality do? O human nature, how I know and mock thee!"

"You are right," said Crauford, aloud; "let us talk of the pamphlet."

And after a short conversation upon indifferent subjects, the visitor departed.

Early the next morning was Mr. Crauford seen on foot, taking his way to the bookseller, whose address he had learnt. The bookseller was known as a man of a strongly evangelical bias. "We must insinuate a lie or two," said Crauford, inly, "about Glendower's principles. He! he! it will be a fine stroke of genius to make the upright tradesman suffer Glendower to starve, out of a principle of religion. But

* See the article on Mr. Moore's Epicurean in the "Westminster Review." Though the strictures on that work are harsh and unjust, yet the part relating to the real philosophy of Epicurus is one of the most masterly things in criticism.

who would have thought my prey had been so easily snared?—why, if I had proposed the matter last night, I verily think he would have agreed to it."

Amusing himself with these thoughts, Crauford arrived at the bookseller's. There he found Fate had saved him from one crime at least. The whole house was in confusion—the bookseller had that morning died of an apoplectic fit.

"Good God! how shocking!" said Crauford to the foreman; "but he was a most worthy man, and Providence could no longer spare him. The ways of Heaven are inscrutable! Oblige me with three copies of that precious tract termed the 'Divine Call.' I should like to be allowed permission to attend the funeral of so excellent a man. Good morning, sir—Alas! alas!" and shaking his head piteously, Mr. Crauford left the shop.

"Hurra!" said he, almost audibly, when he was once more in the street, "hurra! my victim is made, my game is won—death or the devil fights for me. But, hold—there are other booksellers in this monstrous city!—ay, but not above two or three in our philosopher's way. I must forestall him there—so, so—that is soon settled. Now, then, I must leave him, a little while undisturbed, to his fate. Perhaps my next visit may be to him in jail; your debtor's side of the Fleet is almost as good a pleader as an empty stomach—he! he! he!—but the stroke must be made soon, for time presses, and this d——d business spreads so fast that if I don't have a speedy help, it will be too much for my hands, griping as they are. However, if it holds on a year longer, I will change my seat in the lower House for one in the upper; twenty thousand pounds to the minister may make a merchant a very pretty peer. O brave Richard Crauford, wise Richard Crauford, fortunate Richard Crauford, *noble* Richard Crauford! Why, if thou art ever hanged, it will be by a jury of *peers*. Gad, the rope would then have a dignity in it, instead of disgrace. But stay, here comes the Dean of ——; not orthodox, it is said—rigid Calvinist!—out with the 'Divine Call!'"

When Mr. Richard Crauford repaired next to Glendower, what was his astonishment and dismay at hearing he had left his home, none knew whither, nor could give the inquirer the slightest clue.

"How long has he left?" said Crauford to the landlady.

"Five days, sir."

"And will he not return to settle any little debts he may have incurred?" said Crauford.

"Oh, no, sir—he paid them all before he went. Poor gentleman—for though he was poor, he was the finest and most thorough gentleman I ever saw!—my heart bled for him. They parted with all their valuables to discharge their debts: the books, and instruments, and busts—all went; and what I saw, though he spoke so indifferently about it, hurt him the most—he sold even the lady's picture. 'Mrs. Croftson,' said he, 'Mr. ——, the painter, will send for that picture the day after I leave you. See that he has it, and that the greatest care is taken of it in delivery.'"

"And you cannot even guess where he has gone to?"

"No, sir; a single porter was sufficient to convey his remaining goods, and he took him from some distant part of the town."

"Ten thousand devils!" muttered Crauford, as he turned away, "I should have foreseen this! He is lost now. Of course he will again change his name; and in the d——d holes and corners of this gigantic puzzle of houses, how shall I ever find them out?—and time presses too! Well, well, well! there is a fine prize for being cleverer, or, as fools would say, more rascally than others; but there is a world of trouble in winning it. But come—I will go home, lock myself up, and get drunk! I am as melancholy as a cat in love, and about as stupid: and, faith, one must get spirits in order to hit on a new invention. But if there be consistency in fortune, or success in perseverance, or wit in Richard Crauford, that man shall yet be my victim—and preserver!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

> Revenge is now the cud
> That I do chew.—I'll challenge him.
> —BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

WE return to "the world of fashion," as the admirers of the polite novel of —— would say. The noon-day sun broke hot and sultry through half-closed curtains of roseate silk, playing in broken beams upon rare and fragrant exotics,

which cast the perfumes of southern summers over a chamber, moderate, indeed, as to its dimensions, but decorated with a splendor rather gaudy than graceful, and indicating much more a passion for luxury than a refinement of taste.

At a small writing-table sat the beautiful La Meronville. She had just finished a note, written (how Jean Jacques would have been enchanted !) upon paper *couleur de rose*, with a mother-of-pearl pen, formed as one of Cupid's darts, dipped into an inkstand of the same material, which was shaped as a quiver, and placed at the back of a little Love, exquisitely wrought. She was folding this billet when a page, fantastically dressed, entered, and, announcing Lord Borodaile, was immediately followed by that nobleman. Eagerly and almost blushingly did La Meronville thrust the note into her bosom, and hasten to greet and to embrace her adorer. Lord Borodaile flung himself on one of the sofas with a listless and discontented air. The experienced Frenchwoman saw that there was a cloud on his brow—

"My dear friend," said she, in her own tongue, "you seem vexed—has anything annoyed you?"

"No, Cecile, no. By-the-bye, who supped with you last night?"

"Oh! the Duke of Haverfield — your friend."

"My friend!" interrupted Borodaile, haughtily—"he's no friend of mine—a vulgar talkative fellow—my friend, indeed!"

"Well, I beg your pardon: then there was Mademoiselle Caumartin, and the prince Pietro del Orbino, and Mr. Trevanion, and Mr. Lin—Lin—Linten, or Linden."

"And, pray, will you allow me to ask how you become acquainted with Mr. Lin—Lin—Linten, or Linden?"

"Assuredly—through the Duke of Haverfield."

"Humph—Cecile, my love, that young man is not fit to be the acquaintance of my friend—allow me to strike him from your list."

"Certainly, certainly!" said La Meronville, hastily: and stooping as if to pick up a fallen glove, though, in reality, to hide her face from Lord Borodaile's searching eye, the letter she had written fell from her bosom. Lord Borodaile's glance detected the superscription, and before La Meronville could regain the note, he had possessed himself of it.

"A Monsieur, Monsieur Linden!" said he, coldly, reading the address; "and, pray, how long have you corresponded with that gentleman?"

Now La Meronville's situation at that moment was by no means agreeable. She saw at one glance that no falsehood or artifice could avail her; for Lord Borodaile might deem himself fully justified in reading the note, which would contradict any glossing statement she might make. She saw this. She was a woman of independence—cared not a straw for Lord Borodaile at present, though she *had* had a caprice for him—knew that she might choose her *bon ami* out of all London, and replied—

"That is the first letter I ever wrote to him; but I own that it will not be the last."

Lord Borodaile turned pale.

"And will you suffer me to read it?" said he; for even in these cases he was punctiliously honorable.

La Meronville hesitated. She did not know him. "If I do not consent," thought she, "he will do it without the consent: better submit with a good grace."—"Certainly!" she answered, with an air of indifference.

Borodaile opened and read the note; it was as follows:

"You have inspired me with a feeling for you which astonishes myself. Ah, why should that love be the strongest which is the swiftest in its growth? I used to love Lord Borodaile—I now only esteem him—the love has flown to you. If I judge rightly from your words and your eyes, this avowal will not be unwelcome to you. Come and assure me, in person, of a persuasion so dear to my heart.

"C. L. M."

"A very pretty effusion!" said Lord Borodaile, sarcastically, and only showing his inward rage by the increasing paleness of his complexion, and a slight compression of his lip. "I thank you for your confidence in me. All I ask is, that you will not send this note till tomorrow. Allow me to take my leave of you first, and to find in Mr. Linden a successor rather than a rival."

"Your request, my friend," said La Meronville, adjusting her hair, "is but reasonable. I see that you understand these arrangements; and, for my part, I think that the end of love should always be the beginning of friendship—let it be so with us!"

"You do me too much honor," said Borodaile, bowing profoundly. "Meanwhile I depend upon your promise, and bid you, as a lover, farewell for ever."

With his usual slow step Lord Borodaile descended the stairs, and walked towards the central *quartier* of town. His meditations were of no soothing nature. "To be seen by that man in a ridiculous and degrading situation—to be pestered with his d—d civility—to be rivalled by him with Lady Flora—to be duped and outdone by him with my mistress! Ay,—all this have I been; but vengeance shall come yet. As for La Meronville, the loss is a gain; and, thank Heaven, I did not betray myself by venting my passion and making a scene. But it was I who ought to have discarded her—not the reverse—and—death and confusion—for that upstart, above all men! And she talked in her letter about his eyes and words. Insolent coxcomb, to dare to have eyes and words for one who belonged to me. Well, well, he shall smart for this. But let me consider—I must not play the jealous fool—must not fight for a * * * *—must not show the world that a man, nobody knows who, could really outwit and outdo *me*—me—Francis Borodaile!—No, no—I must throw the insult upon him—must myself be the aggressor—and the challenged; then, too, I shall have the choice of weapons—pistols of course. Where shall I hit him, by-the-by?—I wish I shot as well as I used to do at Naples. I was in full practice then.—Cursed place, where there was nothing else to do but to practice!"

Immersed in these, or somewhat similar reflections, did Lord Borodaile enter Pall Mall.

"Ah, Borodaile!" said Lord St. George, suddenly emerging from a shop. "This is really fortunate—you are going my way exactly—allow me to join you."

Now Lord Borodaile, to say nothing of his happening at that time to be in a mood more than usually unsocial, could never at *any* time bear the thought of being made an instrument of convenience, pleasure, or good fortune to another. He therefore, with a little resentment at Lord St. George's familiarity, coldly replied, "I am sorry that I cannot avail myself of your offer. I am sure my way is *not* the same as yours."

"Then," replied Lord St. George, who was a good natured, indolent man, who imagined everybody was as averse to walking alone as he was—"then I will make *mine* the same as yours."

Borodaile colored: though always uncivil, he did not like to be excelled in good manners; and therefore replied, that nothing but extreme business at White's could have induced him to prefer his own way to that of Lord St. George.

The good-natured peer took Lord Borodaile's arm. It was a natural incident, but it vexed the punctilious viscount, that any man should *take*, not *offer*, the support.

"So, they say," observed Lord St. George, "that young Linden is to marry Lady Flora Ardenne."

"*Les on-dits font la gazette des fous*," rejoined Borodaile with a sneer. "I believe that Lady Flora is little likely to contract such a *mesalliance*."

"*Mesalliance!*" replied Lord St. George. "I thought Linden was of a very old family, which you know the Westboroughs are not, and he has great expectations—"

"Which are never to be realized," interrupted Borodaile, laughing scornfully.

"Ah, indeed!" said Lord St. George, seriously. "Well, at all events, he is a very agreeable, unaffected young man—and, by-the-by, Borodaile, you will met him *chez-moi* to-day—you know you dine with me?"

"Meet Mr. Linden! I shall be proud to have that honor," said Borodaile, with sparkling eyes; "will Lady Westborough be also of the party?"

"No, poor Lady St. George is very ill, and I have taken the opportunity to ask only men."

"You have done wisely, my lord," said Borodaile, *secum multa revolvens;* "and I assure you I wanted no hint to remind me of your invitation."

Here the Duke of Haverfield joined them. The duke never bowed to any one of the male sex; he therefore *nodded* to Borodaile, who, with a very supercilious formality, took off his hat in returning the salutation. The viscount had at least this merit in his pride,—that if it was reserved to the humble, it was contemptuous to the high: his inferiors he wished to remain where they were; his equals he longed to lower.

"So I dine with you, Lord St. George, to-day," said the duke; "whom shall I meet?"

"Lord Borodaile, for one," answered St.

George; "my brother, Aspeden, Findlater, Orbino, and Linden."

"Linden!" cried the duke; "I'm very glad to hear it, *c'est un homme fait exprès pour moi.* He is very clever, and not above playing the fool; has humor without setting up for a wit, and is a good fellow without being a bad man. I like him excessively."

"Lord St. George," said Borodaile, who seemed that day to be the very martyr of the unconscious Clarence, "I wish you good morning. I have only just remembered an engagement which I *must* keep before I go to White's."

And, with a bow to the duke, and a remonstrance from Lord St. George, Borodaile effected his escape. His complexion was, insensibly to himself, more raised than usual, his step more stately; his mind, for the first time for years, was fully excited and engrossed. Ah, what a delightful thing it is for an idle man, who has been dying of *ennui*, to find an enemy.

CHAPTER XLIV.

You must challenge him;
There's no avoiding—one or both must drop.
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

"HA, ha, ha—bravo, Linden!" cried Lord St. George, from the head of his splendid board, in approbation of some witticism of Clarence's; and ha, ha, ha! or he, he, he! according to the cachinnatory intonations of the guests, rung around.

"Your lordship seems unwell," said Lord Aspeden to Borodaile; "allow me to take wine with you."

Lord Borodaile bowed his assent.

"Pray," said Mr. St. George to Clarence, "have you seen my friend Talbot lately?"

"This very morning," replied Linden: "indeed, I generally visit him three or four times a week—he often asks after you."

"Indeed!" said Mr. St. George, rather flattered; "he does me much honor; but he is a distant connection of mine, and I suppose I must attribute his recollection of me to that cause. He is a near relation of yours, too, I think—is he not?"

"I *am* related to him," answered Clarence, coloring.

Lord Borodaile leant forward, and his lip curled. Though, in some respects, a very unamiable man, he had, as we have said, his good points. He hated a lie as much as Achilles did; and he believed in his heart of hearts that Clarence had just uttered one.

"Why," observed Lord Aspeden, "why, Lord Borodaile, the Talbots, of Scarsdale, are branches of *your* genealogical tree; therefore your lordship must be related to Linden; you are 'two cherries on one stalk!'"

"We are by no means related," said Lord Borodaile, with a distinct and clear voice, intended expressly for Clarence; "that is an honor which I must beg leave most positively to disclaim."

There was a dead silence—the eyes of all who heard a remark so intentionally rude were turned immedially towards Clarence. His cheek burnt like fire; he hesitated a moment, and then said, in the same key, though with a little trembling in his intonation—

"Lord Borodaile cannot be more anxious to disclaim it than I am."

"And yet," returned the viscount, stung to the soul, "they who advance false pretensions ought at least to support them!"

"I do not understand you, my lord," said Clarence.

"Possibly not," answered Borodaile, carelessly: "there is a maxim which says that people not accustomed to speak truth cannot comprehend it in others."

Unlike the generality of modern heroes, who are always in a passion—off-hand, dashing fellows, in whom irascibility is a virtue—Clarence was peculiarly sweet-tempered by nature, and had, by habit, acquired a command over all his passions to a degree very uncommon in so young a man. He made no reply to the inexcusable affront he had received. His lip quivered a little, and the flush of his countenance was succeeded by an extreme paleness—this was all: he did not even leave the room immediately, but waited till the silence was broken by some well-bred member of the party; and then, pleading an early engagement as an excuse for his retiring so soon, he rose, and departed.

There was throughout the room an universal feeling of sympathy with the affront, and indignation against the offender; for, to say nothing of Clarence's popularity, and the extreme dislike in which Lord Borodaile was held, there

could be no doubt as to the wantonness of the outrage, or the moderation of the aggrieved party. Lord Borodaile already felt the punishment of his offence: his very pride, while it rendered him indifferent to the spirit, had hitherto kept him scrupulous as to the formalities, of social politeness; and he could not but see the grossness with which he had suffered himself to violate them, and the light in which his conduct was regarded. However, this internal discomfort only rendered him the more embittered against Clarence, and the more confirmed in his revenge. Resuming, by a strong effort, all the external indifference habitual to his manner, he attempted to enter into a conversation with those of the party who were next to him; but his remarks produced answers brief and cold: even Lord Aspeden forgot his diplomacy and his smile; Lord St. George replied to his observations by a monosyllable; and the Duke of Haverfield, for the first time in his life, asserted the prerogative which his rank gave him of setting the example—his grace did not reply to Lord Borodaile at all. In truth, every one present was seriously displeased. All civilized societies have a paramount interest in repressing the rude. Nevertheless, Lord Borodaile bore the brunt of his unpopularity with a steadiness and unembarrassed composure worthy of a better cause; and finding, at last, a companion disposed to be loquacious in the person of Sir Christopher Findlater (whose good heart, though its first impulse resented more violently than that of any heart present the discourtesy of the viscount, yet soon warmed to the *desagremens* of his situation, and hastened to adopt its favorite maxim of forgive and forget), Lord Borodaile sat the meeting out; and if he did not leave the latest, he was, at least, not the first to follow Clarence.—"*L'orgueil ou donne le courage, ou il y supplee.*" *

Meanwhile Linden had returned to his solitary home. He hastened to his room—locked the door—flung himself on his sofa, and burst into a violent and almost feminine paroxysm of tears. This fit lasted for more than an hour; and when Clarence at length stilled the indignant swellings of his heart, and rose from his supine position, he started, as his eye fell upon the opposite mirror, so haggard and exhausted seemed the forced and fearful calmness of his countenance. With a hurried step—with arms now folded on his bosom—now wildly tossed from him, and the hand so firmly clenched, that the very bones seemed working through the skin—with a brow now fierce, now only dejected—and a complexion which one while burnt as with the crimson flush of a fever, and at another was wan and colorless, like his whose cheek a spectre has blanched—Clarence paced his apartment, the victim not only of shame—the bitterest of tortures to a young and high mind—but of other contending feelings, which alternatly exasperated and palsied his wrath, and gave to his resolves at one moment an almost savage ferocity, and at the next an almost cowardly vacillation.

The clock had just struck the hour of twelve when a knock at the door announced a visitor. Steps were heard on the stairs, and presently a tap at Clarence's room-door. He unlocked it, and the Duke of Haverfield entered.

"I am charmed to find you at home," cried the duke, with his usual half kind, half careless address. "I was determined to call upon you, and be the first to offer my services in this unpleasant affair."

Clarence pressed the duke's hand, but made no answer.

"Nothing could be so unhandsome as Lord Borodaile's conduct," continued the duke. "I hope you both fence and shoot well. I shall never forgive you, if you do not put an end to that piece of rigidity."

Clarence continued to walk about the room in great agitation; the duke looked at him with some surprise. At last Linden paused by the window, and said, half unconsciously—"It must be so—I cannot avoid fighting!"

"Avoid fighting!" cried his grace, in undisguised astonishment. "No indeed—but that is the least part of the matter—you must kill as well as fight him."

"Kill *him!*" cried Clarence, wildly, "whom!" and then sinking into a chair, he covered his face with his hands for a few moments, and seemed to struggle with his emotions.

"Well," thought the duke, "I never was more mistaken in my life. I could have bet my black horse against Trevanion's Julia, which is certainly the most worthless thing I

* Pride either gives courage or supplies the place of it.

know, that Linden had been a brave fellow: but these English heroes always go into fits at a duel: one manages such things, as Sterne says, better in France."

Clarence now rose, calm and collected. He sat down—wrote a brief note to Borodaile, demanding the fullest apology, or the earliest meeting—put it into the duke's hands and said, with a faint smile. "My dear duke, dare I ask you to be second to a man who has been so grievously affronted, and whose genealogy has been so disputed?"

"My dear Linden," said the duke warmly, "I have always been grateful to my station in life for this advantage, the freedom with which it has enabled me to select my own acquaintance, and to follow my own pursuits. I am now more grateful to it than ever, because it has given me a better opportunity than I should otherwise have had of serving one whom I have always esteemed. In entering into your quarrel, I shall at least show the world that there are some men, not inferior in pretensions to Lord Borodaile, who despise arrogance and resent overbearance even to others. Your cause I consider the common cause of society; but I shall take it up, if you will allow me, with the distinguishing zeal of a friend."

Clarence, who was much affected by the kindness of this speech, replied in a similar vein; and the duke, having read and approved the letter, rose. "There is, in my opinion," said he—"no time to be lost. I will go to Borodaile this very evening—adieu, *mon cher:* you shall kill the Argus, and then carry off the Io. I feel in a double passion with that ambulating poker, who is only malleable when he is red hot, when I think how honorably scrupulous you were with La Meronville last night, notwithstanding all her advances; but I go to bury Cæsar, not to scold him.—*Au revoir.*"

CHAPTER XLV.

Conon.—You're well met, Crates.
Crates.—If we part so, Conon.
—*Queen of Corinth.*

It was as might be expected from the character of the aggressor. Lord Borodaile refused all apology, and agreed with avidity to a speedy rendezvous. He chose pistols (choice, then, was not merely nominal), and selected Mr. Percy Bobus for his second, a gentleman who was much fonder of acting in that capacity, than in the more honorable one of a principal. The author of "Lacon," says, "that if all seconds were as averse to duels as their principals, there would be very little blood spilt in that way;" and it was certainly astonishing to compare the zeal with which Mr. Bobus busied himself about this "affair," with that testified by him on another occasion, when he himself was more immediately concerned.

The morning came. Bobus breakfasted with his friend. "Damn it, Borodaile," said he, as the latter was receiving the ultimate polish of the hair-dresser, "I never saw you look better in my life. It will be a great pity if that fellow shoots you."

"Shoots *me!*" said Lord Borodaile, very quietly—"*me*—no!—that is *quite* out of the question; but joking apart, Bobus, I will not kill the young man. Where shall I hit him?"

"In the cap of the knee," said Mr. Percy, breaking an egg.

"Nay, that will lame him for life," said Lord Borodaile, putting on his cravat with peculiar exactitude.

"Serve him right," said Mr. Bobus. "Hang him, I never got up so early in my life—it is quite impossible to eat at this hour. Oh—*apropos*, Borodaile, have you left any little memoranda for me to execute?"

"Memoranda!—for what?" said Borodaile, who had now just finished his toilet.

"Oh!" rejoined Mr. Percy Bobus, "in case of accident, you know: the man may shoot well, though I never saw him in the gallery."

"Pray," said Lord Borodaile, in a great, though suppressed passion, "pray, Mr. Bobus, how often have I to tell you, that it is not by Mr. Linden that my days are to terminate; you are sure that Carabine saw to that trigger?"

"Certain," said Mr. Percy, with his mouth full, "certain—Bless me here's the carriage, and breakfast not half done yet."

"Come, come," cried Borodaile, impatiently, "we must breakfast afterwards. Here, Roberts, see that we have fresh chocolate, and some more cutlets, when we return."

"I would rather have them now," sighed Mr. Bobus, foreseeing the possibility of the return being single—"*Ibis! redibis?*" etc.

"Come, we have not a moment to lose," exclaimed Borodaile, hastening down the stairs; and Mr. Percy Bobus followed, with a strange mixture of various regrets, partly for the breakfast that *was* lost, and partly for the friend that *might be*.

When they arrived at the ground, Clarence and the duke were already there: the latter, who was a dead shot, had fully persuaded himself that Clarence was equally adroit, and had in his providence for Borodaile, brought a surgeon. This was a circumstance of which the viscount, in the plenitude of his confidence for himself and indifference for his opponent, had never once dreamt.

The ground was measured—the parties were about to take the ground. All Linden's former agitation was vanished—his mien was firm, grave, and determined, but he showed none of the careless and fierce hardihood which characterized his adversary; on the contrary, a close observer might have remarked something sad and dejected amidst all the tranquillity and steadiness of his brow and air.

"For Heaven's sake," whispered the duke, as he withdrew from the spot, "square your body a little more to your left and remember your exact level. Borodaile is much shorter than you."

There was a brief, dread pause—the signal was given—Borodaile fired—his ball pierced Clarence's side; the wounded man staggered one step, but fell not. He raised his pistol; the duke bent eagerly forward; an expression of disappointment and surprise passed his lips; Clarence had fired in the air. The next moment Linden felt a deadly sickness come over him—he fell into the arms of the surgeon. Borodaile, touched by a forbearance which he had so little right to expect, hastened to the spot. He leaned over his adversary in greater remorse and pity than he would have readily confessed to himself. Clarence unclosed his eyes; they dwelt for one moment upon the subdued and earnest countenance of Borodaile.

"Thank God," he said faintly, "that *you* were not the victim," and with those words he fell back insensible. They carried him to his lodgings. His wound was accurately examined. Though not mortal, it was of a dangerous nature; and the surgeons ended a very painful operation, by promising a very lingering recovery.

What a charming satisfaction for being insulted!

CHAPTER XLVI.

Je me contente de ce qui peut s'écrire, et je rêve tout ce qui peut se rêver. * —DE SEVIGNE.

ABOUT a week after his wound, and the second morning of his return to sense and consciousness, when Clarence opened his eyes, they fell upon a female form seated watchfully and anxiously by his bed-side. He raised himself in mute surprise, and the figure, startled by the motion, rose, drew the curtain, and vanished. With great difficulty he rang his bell. His valet, Harrison, on whose mind, though it was of no very exalted order, the kindness and suavity of his master had made a great impression, instantly appeared.

"Who was that lady?" asked Linden. "How came she here?"

Harrison smiled—"Oh, sir, pray please to lie down, and make yourself easy: the lady knows you very well, and *would* come here; she insists upon staying in the house, so we made up a bed in the drawing room, and she has watched by you night and day. She speaks very little English to be sure, but your honor knows, begging your pardon, how well I speak French."

"French!" said Clarence, faintly—"French? In Heaven's name, who is she?"

"A Madame—Madame—La Melonveal, or some such name, sir," said the valet.

Clarence fell back.—At that moment his hand was pressed. He turned, and saw Talbot by his side. The kind old man had not suffered La Meronville to be Linden's only nurse—notwithstanding his age and peculiarity of habits, he had fixed his abode all the day in Clarence's house, and at night, instead of returning to his own home, had taken up his lodgings at the nearest hotel.

With a jealous and anxious eye to the real interest and respectability of his adopted son, Talbot had exerted all his address, and even all his power to induce La Meronville, who had made her settlement previous to Talbot's, to quit the house, but in vain. With that obstinacy which a Frenchwoman, when she is sentimen-

* I content myself with writing what I am able, and I dream all I possibly can dream.

tal, mistakes for nobility of heart, the *ci-devant amante* of Lord Borodaile insisted upon watching and tending one, of whose sufferings, she said and believed she was the unhappy, though innocent cause: and whenever more urgent means of removal were hinted at, La Meronville flew to the chamber of her beloved, apostrophized him in a strain worthy of one of D'Arlincourt's heroines, and in short, was so unreasonably outrageous, that the doctors, trembling for the safety of their patient, obtained from Talbot a forced and reluctant acquiescence in the settlement she had obtained.

Ah! what a terrible creature a Frenchwoman is, when, instead of coqueting with a *caprice*, she insists upon conceiving a *grande passion*. Little, however, did Clarence, despite his vexation, when he learnt of the *bienveillance* of La Meronville, foresee the whole extent of the consequences it would entail upon him; still less did Talbot, who in his seclusion knew not the celebrity of the handsome adventuress, calculate upon the notoriety of her motions, or the ill-effect her ostentatious attachment would have upon Clarence's prosperity as a lover to Lady Flora. In order to explain these consequences more fully, let us, for the present, leave our hero to the care of the surgeon, his friends, and his would-be mistress; and while he is more rapidly recovering than the doctors either hoped or presaged let us renew our acquaintance with a certain fair correspondent.

LETTER FROM THE LADY FLORA ARDENNE, TO MISS ELEANOR TREVANION.

"My dearest Eleanor,

"I have been very ill, or you would sooner have received an answer to your kind—too kind and consoling letter. Indeed, I have only just left my bed: they say that I have been delirious, and I believe it; for you cannot conceive what terrible dreams I have had. But these are all over now, and every one is so kind to me—my poor mother above all! It is a pleasant thing to be ill when we have those who love us to watch our recovery.

"I have only been in bed a few days; yet it seems to me as if a long portion of my existence were past—as if I had stepped into a new era. You remember that my last letter attempted to express my feelings at mamma's speech about Clarence, and at my seeing him so suddenly. Now, dearest, I cannot but look on that day, on these sensations, as on a distant dream. Every one is so kind to me, mamma caresses and soothes me so fondly, that I fancy I must have been under some illusion. I am sure they could not seriously have meant to forbid *his* addresses. No, no: I feel that all will yet be well—so well, that even you, who are of so contented a temper, will own, that if you were not Eleanor you would be Flora.

"I wonder whether Clarence knows that I have been ill. I wish you knew him.—Well, dearest, this letter—a very unhandsome return, I own, for yours—must content you at present, for they will not let me write more—though, so far as I am concerned, I am never so weak, in frame I mean, but what I could scribble to *you* about *him*.

"*Addio—carissima.*

"F. A."

"I have prevailed on mamma, who wished to sit by me and amuse me, to go to the Opera to-night, the only amusement of which she is particularly fond. Heaven forgive me for my insincerity, but *he* always comes into our box, and I long to hear some news of him."

LETTER II.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Eleanor, dearest Eleanor, I am again very ill, but not as I was before, ill from a foolish vexation of mind: no, I am now calm, and even happy. It was from an increase of cold only that I have suffered a relapse. You may believe this, I assure you, in spite of your well-meant but bitter jests upon my infatuation, as you very rightly call it, for Mr. Linden. You ask me what news from the Opera? Silly girl that I was, to lie awake hour after hour, and refuse even to take my draught, lest I should be surprised into sleep, till mamma returned. I sent Jermyn down directly I heard her knock at the door, (oh, how anxiously I had listened for it!) to say that I was still awake and longed to see her. So, of course, mamma came up, and felt my pulse, and said it was very feverish, and wondered the draught had not composed me—with a great deal more to the same purpose, which I bore as patiently as I could till it was my turn to talk; and then I admired her dress and her *coiffure*, and asked if it was a full house, and whether the *prima donna* was in voice, etc., etc.: till, at last, I won my way to the inquiry of who were her visitors. 'Lord Borodaile,' said she, 'and the Duke of ——, and Mr. St. George, and Captain Leslie, and Mr. De Retz, and many others.' I felt so disappointed, Eleanor, but did not dare ask whether he was not of the list; till, at last, my mother observing me narrowly, said—'And, by-the-bye, Mr. Linden looked in for a few minutes. I am glad, my dearest Flora, that I spoke to you so decidedly about him the other day.' 'Why, mamma?' said I, hiding my face under the clothes. 'Because,' said she, in rather a raised voice, 'he is quite unworthy of you!—but it is late now, and you should go to sleep—to-morrow I will tell you more.' I would have given worlds to press the question then, but could not venture. Mamma kissed and left me. I tried to twist her words into a hundred meanings, but in each I only thought that they were dictated by some worldly information—some new doubts as to his birth or fortune; and, though that supposition distressed me greatly, yet it could not alter my love, or deprive me of hope; and so I cried, and guessed, and guessed, and cried, till at last I cried myself to sleep.

"When I awoke, mamma was already up, and sitting beside me: she talked to me for more than an hour upon ordinary subjects, till at last, perceiving how absent or rather impatient I appeared, she dismissed Jermyn, and spoke to me thus:—

"'You know, Flora, that I have always loved you, more perhaps than I ought to have done, more cer-

tainly than I have loved your brothers and sisters; but you were my eldest child, my first-born, and all the earliest associations of a mother are blent and entwined with you. You may be sure therefore that I have ever had only your happiness in view, and that it is only with a regard to that end that I now speak to you.'

"I was a little frightened, Eleanor, by this opening, but I was much more touched, so I took mamma's hand and kissed, and wept silently over it;—she continued: 'I observed Mr. Linden's attention to you, at ——; I knew nothing more of his rank and birth then, than I do at present: but his situation in the embassy and his personal appearance, naturally induced me to suppose him a gentleman of family, and, therefore, if not a great, at least not an inferior match for you, so far as worldly distinctions are concerned. Added to this, he was uncommonly handsome, and had that general reputation for talent which is often better than actual wealth or hereditary titles. I therefore did not check, though I would not encourage any attachment you might form for him; and nothing being declared or decisive on either side when we left ——, I imagined that if your flirtation with him did even amount to a momentary and girlish phantasy, absence and change of scene would easily and rapidly efface the impression. I believe that in a great measure it *was* effaced, when Lord Aspeden returned to England, and with him, Mr. Linden. You again met the latter in society almost as constantly as before; a caprice nearly conquered, was once more renewed; and in my anxiety that you should marry, not for aggrandisement, but happiness, I own to my sorrow, that I rather favored than forbade his addresses. The young man—remember Flora—appeared in society as the nephew and heir of a gentleman of ancient family and considerable property; he was rising in diplomacy, popular in the world, and, so far as we could see, of irreproachable character; this must plead my excuse for tolerating his visits, without instituting further inquiries respecting him, and allowing your attachment to proceed without ascertaining how far it had yet extended. I was awakened to a sense of my indiscretion, by an inquiry, which Mr. Linden's popularity rendered general,—viz.: if Mr. Talbot was his uncle—who was his father—who his more immediate relations? and at that time Lord Borodaile informed us of the falsehood, he had either asserted or allowed to be spread, in claiming Mr. Talbot as his relation. This you will observe entirely altered the situation of Mr. Linden with respect to you. Not only his rank in life became uncertain, but suspicious. Nor was this all: his very personal respectability was no longer unimpeachable. Was this dubious and intrusive person, without a name, and with a sullied honor, to be your suitor? No, Flora; and it was from this indignant conviction that I spoke to you some days since. Forgive me, my child, if I was less cautious, less confidential than I am now. I did not imagine the wound was so deep, and thought that I should best cure you by seeming unconscious of your danger. The case is now changed; your illness has convinced me of my fault, and the extent of your unhappy attachment; but will my own dear child pardon me if I still continue, if I even confirm, my disapproval of her choice? Last night at the Opera Mr. Linden entered my box. I own that I was cooler to him than usual. He soon left us, and after the Opera I saw him with the Duke of Haverfield, one of the most incorrigible *roues* of the day, leading out a woman of notoriously bad character, and of the most ostentatious profligacy. He might have had some propriety, some decency, some concealment at least, but he passed just before me—before the mother of the woman to whom his vows of honorable attachment were due, and who at that very instant was suffering from her infatuation for him. Now, Flora, for this man, an obscure, and possibly a plebeian adventurer—whose only claim to notice has been founded on falsehood—whose only merit, a love of you, has been, if not utterly destroyed, at least polluted and debased—for this man, poor alike in fortune, character and honor, can you any longer profess affection or esteem?'

"'Never, never, never!' cried I, springing from the bed, and throwing myself upon my mother's neck. 'Never: I am your own Flora once more. I will never suffer any one again to make me forget you,'—and then I sobbed so violently that mamma was frightened, and made me lie down, and left me to sleep. Several hours have passed since then, and I could not sleep nor think, and I would not cry, for he is no longer worthy of my tears; so I have written to you.

"Oh, how I despise and hate myself for having so utterly, in my vanity and folly, forgotten my mother, that dear, kind, constant friend, who never cost me a single tear, but for my own ingratitude. Think, Eleanor, what an affront to me—to me, who, he so often said, had made all other women worthless in his eyes. Do I hate him? No, I cannot hate. Do I despise? No, I will not despise, but I will forget him, and keep my contempt and hatred for myself.

"God bless you—I am worn out. Write soon, or rather come, if possible, to your affectionate but unworthy friend,

"F. A."

"Good Heavens! Eleanor, he is wounded. He has fought with Lord Borodaile. I have just heard it; Jermyn told me. Can it, can it be true? What,—what have I said against him? Hate?—forget? No, no: I never loved him till now."

LETTER III.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

(After an interval of several weeks.)

"TIME has flown, my Eleanor, since you left me, after your short but kind visit, with a heavy but healing wing. I do not think I shall ever again be the giddy girl I have been; but my head will change, not my heart; *that* was never giddy, and that shall still be as much yours as ever. You are wrong in thinking I have not forgotten, at least renounced all affection for, Mr. Linden. I have, though with a long and bitter effort. The woman for whom he fought went, you know, to his house, immediately on hearing of his wound. She has continued with him ever since. He had the audacity to write to me once; my mother brought me the note, and said nothing. She read my heart aright. I returned it unopened. He has even called since his convalescence. Mamma was not at home to him. I hear that he looks pale and altered. I hope not—at least I cannot resist praying for his recovery. I stay within entirely; the season is now over, and there are no parties: but I tremble at the thought of meeting him even in the Park or the Gardens. Papa talks of going into the country next week. I cannot tell you how eagerly I look forward to it; and you will then come and see me—will you not, dearest Eleanor?

"Ah! what happy days we will have yet; we will

read Italian together, as we used to do; you shall teach me your songs, and I will instruct you in mine: we will keep birds as we did—let me see—eight years ago. You will never talk to me of my folly: let that be as if it had never been; but I will wonder with you about your future choice, and grow happy in anticipating your happiness. Oh, how selfish I was some weeks ago—then I could only overwhelm you with my egotisms; now, Eleanor, it is your turn, and you shall see how patiently I will listen to yours. Never fear that you can be too prolix; the diffuser you are, the easier I shall forgive myself.

"Are you fond of poetry, Eleanor? I used to say so, but I never felt that I was till lately. I will show you my favorite passages, in my favorite poets, when you come to see me. You shall see if yours correspond with mine. I am so impatient to leave this horrid town, where everything seems dull, yet feverish—insipid, yet false. Shall we not be happy when we meet? If your dear aunt will come with you, she shall see how I (that is, my mind) am improved.

"Farewell,

"Ever your most affectionate,

"F. A."

CHAPTER XLVII.

Brave Talbot, we will follow thee.—*Henry the Sixth.*

"My letter insultingly returned—myself refused admittance—not a single inquiry made during my illness—indifference joined to positive contempt. By Heaven, it is insupportable!"

"My dear Clarence," said Talbot, to his young friend, who, fretful from pain, and writhing beneath his mortification, walked to and fro his chamber with an impatient stride; "my dear Clarence, do sit down, and not irritate your wound by such violent exercise. I am as much enraged as yourself at the treatment you have received, and no less at a loss to account for it. Your duel, however unfortunate the event, must have done you credit, and obtained you a reputation both for generosity and spirit; so that it cannot be to that occurrence that you are to attribute the change. Let us rather suppose that Lady Flora's attachment to you has become evident to her father and mother—that they naturally think it would be very undesirable to marry their daughter to a man whose family nobody knows, and whose respectability he is forced into fighting in order to support. Suffer me then to call upon Lady Westborough, whom I knew many years ago, and explain your origin, as well as your relationship to me."

Linden paused irresolutely.

"Were I sure that Lady Flora was not utterly influenced by her mother's worldly views, I would gladly consent to your proposal—but—"

"Forgive me, Clarence," cried Talbot; "but you really argue much more like a very young man than I ever heard you do before—even four years ago. To be sure Lady Flora *is* influenced by her mother's views. Would you have her otherwise? Would you have her, in defiance of all propriety, modesty, obedience to her parents, and right feeling for herself, encourage an attachment to a person not only unknown, but who does not even condescend to throw off the incognito to the woman he addresses? Come, Clarence, give me my instructions, and let me act as your ambassador to-morrow."

Clarence was silent.

"I may consider it settled then," replied Talbot: "meanwhile you shall come home and stay with me: the pure air of the country, even so near town, will do you more good than all the doctors in London; and, besides, you will thus be enabled to escape from that persecuting Frenchwoman."

"In what manner?" said Clarence.

"Why, when you are in my house, she cannot well take up her abode with you; and you shall, while I am forwarding your suit with Lady Flora, write a very flattering, very grateful letter of excuses to Madame la Meronville. But leave me alone to draw it up for you; meanwhile let Harrison pack up your clothes and medicines, and we will effect our escape while Madame la Meronville yet sleeps."

Clarence rung the bell; the orders were given, executed, and in less than an hour he and his friend were on their road to Talbot's villa.

As they drove slowly through the grounds to the house, Clarence was sensibly struck with the quiet and stillness which breathed around. On either side of the road the honeysuckle and rose cast their sweet scents to the summer wind, which, though it was scarcely noon, stirred freshly among the trees, and waved, as if it breathed a second youth over the wan cheek of the convalescent. The old servant's ear had caught the sound of wheels, and he came to the door, with an expression of quiet delight on his dry countenance, to welcome in his

master. They had lived together for so many years, that they were grown like one another. Indeed, the veteran valet prided himself on his happy adoption of his master's dress and manner. A proud man, we ween, was that domestic, whenever he had time and listeners for the indulgence of his honest loquacity; many an ancient tale of his master's former glories was then poured from his unburthening remembrance. With what a glow, with what a racy enjoyment did he expand upon the triumphs of the past; how eloquently did he particularize the exact grace with which *young* Mr. Talbot was wont to enter the room, in which he instantly became the cynosure of ladies' eyes; how faithfully did he minute the courtly dress, the exquisite choice of color, the costly splendor of material, which were the envy of gentles, and the despairing wonder of their valets; and then the zest with which the good old man would cry—"I dressed the boy!" Even still, this modern Scipio (Le Sage's Scipio, not Rome's) would not believe that his master's sun was utterly set: he was only in a temporary retirement, and would, one day or other, reappear and reastonish the London world. "I would give my right arm," Jasper was wont to say, "to see master at court. How fond the king would be of him.—Ah! well, well; I wish he was not so melancholy like with his books, but would go out like other people!"

Poor Jasper! Time is, in general, a harsh wizard in his transformations; but the change which thou didst lament so bitterly, was happier for thy master than all his former "palmy state" of admiration and homage. "*Nous avons recherché le plaisir,*" says Rousseau, in one of his own inimitable antitheses—"*et le bonheur a fui loin de nous.*" * But in the pursuit of Pleasure we sometimes chance on Wisdom, and Wisdom leads us to the right track, which, if it take us not so far as Happiness, is sure at least of the shelter of Content.

Talbot leant kindly upon Jasper's arm as he descended from the carriage, and inquired into his servant's rheumatism with the anxiety of a friend. The old housekeeper, waiting in the hall, next received his attention; and in entering the drawing-room, with that consideration, even to animals, which his worldly benevolence had taught him, he paused to notice and caress a large gray cat which rubbed herself against his legs. Doubtless there is some pleasure in making even a gray cat happy!

Clarence having patiently undergone all the shrugs, and sighs, and exclamations of compassion at his reduced and wan appearance, which are the especial prerogatives of ancient domestics, followed the old man into the room. Papers and books, though carefully dusted, were left scrupulously in the places in which Talbot had last deposited them—(incomparable good fortune! what would we not give for such chamber hand-maidens!)—fresh flowers were in all the stands and vases; the large library chair was jealously set in its accustomed place, and all wore, to Talbot's eyes, that cheerful yet sober look of welcome and familiarity which makes a friend of our house.

The old man was in high spirits—

"I know not how it is," said he, "but I feel younger than ever! You have often expressed a wish to see my family seat at Scarsdale: it is certainly a great distance hence; but as you will be my travelling companion, I think I will try and crawl there before the summer is over; or, what say you, Clarence, shall I lend it to you and Lady Flora for the honeymoon?—You blush!—A diplomatist blush!—Ah, how the world has changed since my time! But come, Clarence, suppose you write to La Meronville?"

"Not to day, sir, if you please," said Linden, "I feel so very weak."

"As you please, Clarence; but some years hence you will learn the value of the present. Youth is always a procrastinator, and consequently, always a penitent." And thus Talbot ran on into a strain of conversation, half serious, half gay, which lasted till Clarence went up stairs to lie down and muse on Lady Flora Ardenne.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

"La vie est un sommeil.—Les vieillards sont ceux dont le sommeil a été plus long: ils ne commencent à se réveiller que quand il faut mourir." *—LA BRUYERE.

"You wonder why I have never turned

* We have pursued pleasure, and happiness has fled from our reach.

* Life is a sleep—the aged are those whose sleep has been the longest; they begin to awaken themselves just as they are obliged to die.

author, with my constant love of literature, and my former desire of fame," said Talbot, as he and Clarence sate alone after dinner, "discussing many things:" "the fact is, that I have often intended it, and as often been frightened from my design. Those terrible feuds—those vehement disputes—those recriminations of abuse, so inseparable from literary life, appear to me too dreadful for a man not utterly hardened or malevolent voluntarily to encounter. Good heavens! what acerbity sours the blood of an author! The manifestos of opposing generals, advancing to pillage, to burn, to destroy, contain not a tithe of the ferocity which animates the pages of literary controversialists! No term of reproach is too severe, no vituperation too excessive!—the blackest passions, the bitterest, the meanest malice, pour caustic and poison upon every page! It seems as if the greatest talents, the most elaborate knowledge, only sprung from the weakest and worst-regulated mind, as exotics from dung. The private records, the public works of men of letters, teem with an immitigable fury! Their histories might all be reduced into these sentences—they were born—they quarrelled—they died!"

"But," said Clarence, "it would matter little to the world if these quarrels were confined merely to poets and men of imaginative literature, in whom irritability is perhaps almost necessarily allied to the keen and quick susceptibilities which constitute their genius. These are more to be lamented and wondered at among philosophers, theologians, and men of science; the coolness, the patience, the benevolence, which ought to characterize their works, should at least moderate their jealousy and soften their disputes."

"Ah!" said Talbot, "but the vanity of discovery is no less acute than that of creation: the self-love of a philosopher is no less self-love than that of a poet. Besides, those sects the most sure of their opinions, whether in religion or science, are always the most bigoted and persecuting. Moreover, nearly all men deceive themselves in disputes, and imagine that they are intolerent, not through private jealousy, but public benevolence; they never declaim against the injustice done to themselves—no, it is the terrible injury *done* to *society* which grieves and inflames them. It is not the bitter expressions against *their* dogmas which give them pain: by no means; it is the atrocious doctrines—so prejudicial to the country, if in politics—so pernicious to the world, if in philosophy—which their duty, not their vanity, induces them to denounce and anathematize."

"There seems," said Clarence, "to be a sort of reaction in sophistry and hypocrisy; there has, perhaps, never been a deceiver who was not, by his own passions, himself the deceived."

"Very true," said Talbot; "and it is a pity that historians have not kept that fact in view; we should then have had a better notion of the Cromwells and Mahomets of the past than we have now, nor judged those as utter impostors who were probably half dupes. But to return to myself. I think you will already be able to answer your own question, why I did not turn author, now that we have given a momentary consideration to the penalties consequent on such a profession. But in truth, as I near the close of my life, I often regret that I had not more courage, for there is in us all a certain restlessness in the persuasion, whether true or false, of superior knowledge or intelleet, and this urges us on to the proof; or, if we resist its impulse, renders us discontented with our idleness, and disappointed with the past. I have everything now in my possession which it has been the desire of my later years to enjoy: health, retirement, successful study, and the affection of one in whose breast, when I am gone, my memory will not utterly pass away. With these advantages, added to the gifts of fortune, and an habitual elasticity of spirit, I confess that my happiness is not free from a biting and frequent regret: I would fain have been a better citizen; I would fain have died in the consciousness, not only that I had improved my mind to the utmost, but that I had turned that improvement to the benefit of my fellow-creatures. As it is, in living wholly for myself, I feel that my philosophy has wanted generosity; and my indifference to glory has proceeded from a weakness, not, as I once persuaded myself, from a virtue; but the fruitlessness of my existence has been the consequence of the arduous frivolities and the petty objects in which my early years were consumed; and my mind, in losing the enjoyments which it formerly possessed, had no longer the vigor to create for itself a new soil, from which labor it could

only hope for more valuable fruits. It is no contradiction to see those who most eagerly courted society in their youth shrink from it the most sensitively in their age; for they who possess certain advantages, and are morbidly vain of them, will naturally be disposed to seek that sphere for which those advantages are best calculated; and when youth and its concomitants depart, the vanity so long fed still remains, and perpetually mortifies them by recalling not so much the qualities they have lost, as the esteem which those qualities conferred; and by contrasting not so much their own present alteration, as the change they experience in the respect and consideration of others. What wonder, then, that they eagerly fly from the world, which has only mortification for their self-love, or that we find, in biography, how often the most assiduous votaries of pleasure have become the most rigid of recluses? For my part, I think that that love of solitude which the ancients so eminently possessed, and which, to this day, is considered by some as the sign of a great mind, nearly always arises from a tenderness of vanity, easily wounded in the commerce of the rough world; and that it is under the shadow of Disappointment that we must look for the hermitage. Diderot did well, even at the risk of offending Rousseau, to write against solitude. The more a moralist binds man to man, and forbids us to divorce our interests from our kind, the more effectually is the end of morality obtained. They only are justifiable in seclusion who, like the Greek philosophers, make that very seclusion the means of serving and enlightening their race—who from their retreats send forth their oracles of wisdom, and render the desert which surrounds them eloquent with the voice of truth. But remember, Clarence (and let my life, useless in itself, have at least this moral), that for him who in nowise cultivates his talent for the benefit of others; who is contented with being a good hermit at the expense of being a bad citizen; who looks from his retreat upon a life wasted in the *difficiles nugæ* of the most frivolous part of the world, nor redeems in the closet the time he has mispent in the saloon; remember, that for him seclusion loses its dignity, philosophy its comfort, benevolence its hope, and even religion its balm. Knowledge, unemployed, may preserve us from vice—but *knowledge beneficently employed is virtue.* Perfect happiness, in our present state, is impossible; for Hobbes says justly, that our nature is inseparable from desires, and that the very word desire (the craving for something not possessed) implies that our present felicity is not complete. But there is one way of attaining what we may term, if not utter, at least mortal happiness; it is this—a sincere and unrelaxing activity for the happiness of others. In that one maxim is concentrated whatever is noble in morality, sublime in religion, or unanswerable in truth. In that pursuit we have *all* scope for whatever is excellent in our hearts, and *none* for the petty passions which our nature is heir to. Thus engaged, whatever be our errors, there will be nobility, not weakness in our remorse; whatever our failure, virtue not selfishness in our regret; and, in success, vanity itself will become holy and triumph eternal. As astrologers were wont to receive upon metals 'the benign aspect of the stars, so as to detain and fix, as it were, the felicity of that hour which would otherwise be volatile and fugitive,' * even so will that success leave imprinted upon our memory a blessing which cannot pass away—preserve for ever upon our names, as on a signet, the hallowed influence of the hour in which our great end was effected, and treasure up 'the relics of heaven' in the sanctuary of a human fame."

As the old man ceased, there was a faint and hectic flush over his face, an enthusiasm on his features, which age made almost holy, and which Clarence had never observed there before. In truth, his young listener was deeply affected, and the advice of his adopted parent was afterwards impressed with a more awful solemnity upon his remembrance. Already he had acquired much worldly lore from Talbot's precepts and conversation. He had obtained even something better than worldly lore—a kindly and indulgent disposition to his fellow-creatures; for he had seen that foibles were not inconsistent with generous and great qualities, and that we judge wrongly of human nature when we ridicule its littleness. The very circumstances which make the shallow misanthropical, incline the wise to be benevolent. Fools discover that frailty is not incompatible with great men, they wonder and despise; but the discerning find that greatness is not incompatible with frailty, and they admire and indulge.

* Bacon.

But a still greater benefit than this of toleration did Clarence derive from the commune of that night. He became strengthened in his honorable ambition, and nerved to unrelaxing exertion. The recollection of Talbot's last words, on that night, occurred to him often and often, when sick at heart, and languid with baffled hope!—it roused him from that gloom and despondency which are always unfavorable to virtue, and incited him once more to that labor in the vineyard which, whether our hour be late or early, will, if earnest, obtain a blessing and reward.

The hour was now waxing late, and Talbot, mindful of his companion's health, rose to retire. As he pressed Clarence's hand and bade him farewell for the night, Linden thought there was something more than usually impressive in his manner and affectionate in his words. Perhaps this was the natural result of their conversation.

The next morning, Clarence was awakened by a noise. He listened, and heard distinctly an alarmed cry proceeding from the room in which Talbot slept, and which was opposite to his own. He rose hastily and hurried to the chamber. The door was open, the old servant was bending over the bed: Clarence approached, and saw that he supported his master in his arms. "Good God!" he cried, "what is the matter?" The faithful old man lifted up his face to Clarence, and the big tears rolled fast from eyes, in which the sources of such emotions were well nigh dried up.

"He loved you well, sir!" he said, and could say no more. He dropped the body gently, and, throwing himself on the floor, sobbed aloud. With a foreboding and chilled heart, Clarence bent forward; the face of his benefactor lay directly before him, and the hand of death was upon it. The soul had passed to its account hours since, in the hush of night: passed, apparently, without a struggle or a pang, like the wind, which animates the harp one moment, and the next is gone.

Linden seized his hand—it was heavy and cold, his eye rested upon the miniature of the unfortunate Lady Merton, which, since the night of the attempted robbery, Talbot had worn constantly round his neck. Strange and powerful was the contrast of the pictured face, in which not a color had yet faded, and where the hues, and fulness, and prime of youth dwelt, unconscious of the lapse of years, with the aged and shrunken countenance of the deceased.

In that contrast was a sad and mighty moral; it wrought, as it were, a contract between youth and age, and conveyed a rapid but full history of our passions and our life.

The servant looked up once more on the countenance; he pointed towards it, and muttered — "See — see! how awfully it is changed!"

"But there is a smile upon it!" said Clarence, as he flung himself beside the body, and burst into tears.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Virtue is like precious odors, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed: for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue. —Bacon.

It is somewhat remarkable, that while Talbot was bequeathing to Clarence, as the most valuable of legacies, the doctrines of a philosophy he had acquired, perhaps too late to practise, Glendower was carrying those very doctrines, so far as his limited sphere would allow, into the rule and exercise of his life.

Since the death of the bookseller, which we have before recorded, Glendower had been left utterly without resource. The others to whom he applied were indisposed to avail themselves of an unknown ability. The trade of book-making was not then as it is now, and if it had been, it would not have suggested itself to the high-spirited and unworldly student. Some publishers offered, it is true, a reward tempting enough for an immoral tale; others spoke of the value of an attack upon the Americans; one suggested an ode to the minister, and another hinted that a pension might possibly be granted to one who would prove extortion not tyranny. But these insinuations fell upon a dull ear, and the tribe of Barabbas were astonished to find that an author could imagine interest and principle not synonymous.

Struggling with want, which hourly grew more imperious and urgent; wasting his heart on studies which brought fever to his pulse, and disappointment to his ambition; gnawed to the very soul by the mortifications which

his poverty gave to his pride; and watching with tearless eyes, but a maddening brain, the slender form of his wife, now waxing weaker and fainter, as the canker of disease fastened upon the core of her young but blighted life, there was yet a high, though, alas! not constant consolation within him, whenever, from the troubles of this dim spot his thoughts could escape, like birds released from their cage, and lose themselves in the lustre and freedom of their native heaven.

"If," thought he, as he looked upon his secret and treasured work, "if the wind scatter, or the rock receive these seeds, they were at least dispersed by a hand which asked no selfish return, and a heart which would have lavished the harvest of its labors upon those who know not the husbandman, and trample his hopes into the dust."

But by degrees, this comfort of a noble and generous nature, these whispers of a vanity rather to be termed holy than excusable, began to grow unfrequent and low. The cravings of a more engrossing and heavy want than those of the mind, came eagerly and rapidly upon him; the fair cheek of his infant became pinched and hollow; his wife conquered nature itself by love, and starved herself in silence, and set bread before him with a smile, and bade him eat.

"But you—you?" he would ask inquiringly, and then pause.

"I *have* dined, dearest: I want nothing; eat, love, eat."

But he eat not. The food robbed from her seemed to him more deadly than poison; and he would rise, and dash his hand to his brow, and go forth alone, with nature unsatisfied to look upon this luxurious world, and learn *content*.

It was after such a scene that, one day, he wandered forth into the streets, desperate and confused in mind, and fainting with hunger, and half insane with fiery and wrong thoughts, which dashed over his barren and gloomy soul, and desolated, but conquered not! It was evening: he stood (for he had strode on so rapidly, at first, that his strength was now exhausted and he was forced to pause), leaning against the railed area of a house, in a lone and unfrequented street. No passenger shared the dull and obscure thoroughfare. He stood literally, in scene as in heart, solitary amidst the great city, and wherever he looked — lo! there were none!

"Two days," said he, slowly and faintly, "two days, and bread has only once passed my lips; and that was snatched from her—from those lips which I have fed with sweet and holy kisses, and whence my sole comfort in this weary life has been drawn. And she—ay, she starves—and my child, too. They complain not—they murmur not—but they lift up their eyes to me and ask for ——. Merciful God, thou *didst* make man in benevolence; thou *dost* survey this world with a pitying and paternal eye—save, comfort, cherish them, and crush *me* if thou wilt!"

At that moment a man darted suddenly from an obscure alley, and passed Glendower at full speed; presently came a cry, and a shout, and the rapid trampling of feet, and, in another moment, an eager and breathless crowd rushed upon the solitude of the street.

"Where is he?" cried a hundred voices to Glendower—"where—which road did the robber take?"—But Glendower could not answer; his nerves were unstrung, and his dizzy brain swam and reeled: and the faces which peered upon him, and the voices which shrieked and yelled in his ear, were to him as the forms and sounds of a ghastly and phantasmal world. His head drooped upon his bosom—he clung to the area for support—the crowd passed on—they were in pursuit of guilt—they were thirsting after blood—they were going to fill the dungeon and feed the gibbet—what to them was the virtue they could have supported, or the famine they could have relieved? But they knew not his distress, nor the extent of his weakness, or some would have tarried and aided, for there is, after all, as much kindness as cruelty in our nature; perhaps they thought it was only some intoxicated and maudlin idler—or, perhaps, in the heat of their pursuit, they thought not at all.

So they rolled on, and their voices died away, and their steps were hushed, and Glendower, insensible and cold as the iron he clung to, was once more alone. Slowly he revived; he opened his dim and glazing eyes, and saw the evening star break from its chamber, and, though sullied by the thick and foggy air, scatter its holy smiles upon the polluted city.

He looked quietly on the still night, and its first watcher among the hosts of heaven, and

felt something of balm sink into his soul; not, indeed, that vague and delicious calm which, in his boyhood of poesy and romance, he had drank in, by green solitudes, from the mellow twilight;—but a quiet, sad and sober, circling gradually over his mind, and bringing it back from its confused and disordered visions and darkness, to the recollection and reality of his bitter life.

By degrees the scene he had so imperfectly witnessed, the flight of the robber, and the eager pursuit of the mob, grew over him: a dark and guilty thought burst upon his mind.

"I am a man, like that criminal," said he, fiercely. "I have nerves, sinews, muscles, flesh; I feel hunger, thirst, pain, as acutely; why should I endure more than he can? Perhaps he had a wife—a child—and he saw them starving inch by inch, and he felt that he *ought* to be their protector—and so he sinned.—And I—I—can I not sin too for mine? can I not dare what the wild beast, and the vulture, and the fierce hearts of my brethren dare for their mates and young? One gripe of this hand—one cry from this voice—and my board might be heaped with plenty, and my child fed, and *she* smile as she was wont to smile—for one night at least."

And as these thoughts broke upon him, Glendower rose, and with a step firm, even in weakness, he strode unconsciously onward.

A figure appeared; Glendower's heart beat thick. He slouched his hat over his brows, and for one moment wrestled with his pride and his stern virtue; the virtue conquered, but not the pride; the virtue forbade him to be the robber—the pride submitted to be the suppliant. He sprung forward, extended his hands towards the stranger, and cried in a sharp voice, the agony of which wrung through the long dull street with a sudden and echoless sound, "Charity—food!"

The stranger paused—one of the boldest of men in his own line, he was as timid as a women in any other; mistaking the meaning of the petitioner, and terrified by the vehemence of his gesture, he said, in a trembling tone, as he hastily pulled out his purse—

"There, there! do not hurt me—take it—take all!"

Glendower knew the voice, as a sound not unfamiliar to him; his pride returned in full force. "None," thought he, "who know me, shall know my full degradation also." And he turned away; but the stranger, mistaking this motion, extended his hand to him, saying, "Take this, my friend—you will have no need of violence!" and as he advanced nearer to his supposed assailant, he beheld, by the pale lamp-light, and instantly recognized, his features.

"Ah!" cried he, in astonishment, but with internal rejoicing—"ah! is it you who are thus reduced!"

"You say right, Crauford," said Glendower, sullenly, and drawing himself up to his full height, "it is *I!* but you are mistaken;—I am a beggar, not a ruffian!"

"Good Heavens!" answered Crauford; "how fortunate that we should meet! Providence watches over us unceasingly! I have long sought you in vain. But"—(and here the wayward malignity, sometimes, though not always, the characteristic of Crauford's nature, irresistibly broke out)—"but that you, of all men, should suffer so—you, proud, susceptible, virtuous beyond human virtue—you, whose fibres are as acute as the naked eye—that *you* should bear this, and wince not!"

"You do my humanity wrong!" said Glendower, with a bitter and almost ghastly smile; "I do worse than wince!"

"Ay, is it so!" said Crauford: "have you awakened at last? Has your philosophy taken a more impassioned dye?"

"Mock me not!" cried Glendower, and his eye, usually soft in its deep thoughtfulness, glared wild and savage upon the hypocrite, who stood trembling, yet half sneering, at the storm he had raised—"my passions are even now beyond my mastery—loose them not upon you!"

"Nay," said Crauford, gently, "I meant not to vex or wound you. I have sought you several times since the last night we met, but in vain; you had left your lodgings, and none knew whither. I would fain talk with you. I have a scheme to propose to you which will make you rich for ever—rich—literally rich!—not merely above poverty, but high in affluence!"

Glendower looked incredulously at the speaker, who continued—

"The scheme has danger—*that* you can dare!"

Glendower was still silent; but his set and

stern countenance was sufficient reply. "Some sacrifice of your pride," continued Crauford—"that also you can bear?" and the tempter almost grinned with pleasure as he asked the question.

"He who is poor," said Glendower, speaking at last, "has a right to pride. He who starves has it too; but he who sees those whom he loves famish, and cannot aid, has it not!"

"Come home with me, then," said Crauford; "you seem faint and weak: nature craves food—come and partake of mine—we will then talk over this scheme, and arrange its completion."

"I cannot," answered Glendower, quietly.

"And why?"

"Because *they* starve at home!"

"Heavens!" said Crauford, affected for a moment into sincerity—"it is indeed fortunate that business should have led me here; but, meanwhile, you will not refuse this trifle—as a loan merely. By and by our scheme will make you so rich, that I must be the borrower."

Glendower *did* hesitate for a moment—he did swallow a bitter rising of the heart; but he thought of those at home, and the struggle was over.

"I thank you," said he; "I thank you for their sake: the *time may* come,"—and the proud gentleman stopped short, for his desolate fortunes rose before him, and forbade all hope of the future.

"Yes!" cried Crauford, "the time may come when you will repay me this money a hundred-fold. But where do you live? You are silent. Well, you will not inform me—I understand you. Meet me, then, here, on this very spot, three nights hence—you will not fail?"

"I will not," said Glendower; and pressing Crauford's hand with a generous and grateful warmth, which might have softened a heart less obdurate, he turned away.

Folding his arms while a bitter yet joyous expression crossed his countenance, Crauford stood still, gazing upon the retreating form of the noble and unfortunate man whom he had marked for destruction.

"Now," said he, "this virtue is a fine thing, a very fine thing to talk so loftily about. A little craving of the gastric juices, a little pinching of this vile body, as your philosophers and saints call our better part, and, lo! virtue oozes out like water through a leaky vessel,—and the vessel sinks! No, no; virtue is a weak game, and a poor game, and a losing game. Why, there is that man, the very pink of integrity and rectitude, he is now only wanting temptation to fall—and he *will* fall, in a fine phrase, too, I'll be sworn! And then, having once fallen, there will be no medium—he will become utterly corrupt; while *I*, honest Dick Crauford, doing as other wise men do, cheat a trick or two, in playing with fortune, without being a whit the worse for it. Do I not subscribe to charities; am I not constant at church, ay, and meeting to boot; kind to my servants, obliging to my friends, loyal to my king? 'Gad, if I were less loving to myself, I should have been far less useful to my country! And, now, now, let me see what has brought me to these filthy suburbs! Ah, Madam H——. Woman, incomparable woman! On, Richard Crauford, thou hast made a good night's work of it hitherto!—business seasons pleasure!" and the villain upon system moved away.

Glendower hastened to his home; it was miserably changed, even from the humble abode in which we last saw him. The unfortunate pair had chosen their present residence from a melancholy refinement in luxury; they had chosen it because none else shared it with them and their famine, and pride, and struggles, and despair, were without witness or pity.

With a heavy step Glendower entered the chamber where his wife sat. When at a distance he had heard a faint moan, but as he had approached, it ceased; for she, from whom it came, knew his step, and hushed her grief and pain that they might not add to his own. The peevishness, the querulous and stinging irritations of want, came not to that affectionate and kindly heart; nor could all those biting and bitter evils of fate, which turn the love that is born of luxury into rancor and gall, scathe the beautiful and holy passion which had knit into one those two unearthly natures. They rather clung the closer to each other, as all things in heaven and earth spoke in tempest or in gloom around them, and coined their sorrows into endearment, and their looks into smiles, and strove each from the depth of despair, to pluck hope and comfort for the other.

This, it is true, was more striking and constant in her than in Glendower! for in love, man, be he ever so generous, is always outdone.

Yet even when in moments of extreme passion and conflict, the strife broke from his breast into words, never once was his discontent vented upon her, nor his reproaches lavished on any but fortune or himself, nor his murmurs mingled with a single breath wounding to her tenderness, or detracting from his love.

He threw open the door; the wretched light cast its sickly beams over the squalid walls, foul with green damps, and the miserable yet clean bed, and the fireless hearth, and the empty board, and the pale cheek of the wife, as she rose and flung her arms round his neck, and murmured out her joy and welcome. "There," said he, as he extricated himself from her, and flung the money upon the table, "there, love, pine no more, feed yourself and our daughter, and then let us sleep and be happy in our dreams."

A writer, one of the most gifted of the present day, has told the narrator of this history, that no interest of a high nature can be given to extreme poverty. I know not if this be true; yet if I mistake not our human feelings, there is nothing so exalted, or so divine, as a great and brave spirit working out its end through every earthly obstacle and evil: watching through the utter darkness, and steadily defying the phantoms which crowd around it; wrestling with the mighty allurements, and rejecting the fearful voices of that WANT which is the deadliest and surest of human tempters; nursing through all calamity, the love of species, and the warmer and closer affections of private ties; sacrificing no duty, resisting all sin; and amidst every horror and every humiliation, feeding the still and bright light of that genius which, like the lamp of the fabulist, though it may waste itself for years amidst the depths of solitude, and the silence of the tomb, shall live and burn immortal and undimmed, when all around it is rottenness and decay!

And yet I confess that it is a painful and bitter task to record the humiliations, the wearing, petty, stinging humiliations, of Poverty; to count the drops as they slowly fall, one by one, upon the fretted and indignant heart; to particularize, with the scrupulous and nice hand of indifference, the fractional and divided movements in the dial-plate of Misery; to behold the refinement of birth, the masculine pride of blood, the dignities of intellect, the wealth of knowledge, the delicacy and graces of womanhood—all that ennoble and soften the stony mass of common places which *is* our life, frittered into atoms, trampled into the dust and mire of the meanest thoroughfares of distress; life and soul, the energies and aims of man, ground into one prostrating want, cramped into one levelling sympathy with the dregs and refuse of his kind, blistered into a single galling and festering sore: this is, I own, a painful and a bitter task; but it hath its redemption: a pride even in debasement, a pleasure even in woe: and it is therefore that while I have abridged, I have not shunned it. There are some whom the lightning of fortune blasts, only to render holy. Amidst all that humbles and scathes—amidst all that shatters from their life its verdure, smites to the dust the pomp and summit of their pride, and in the very heart of existence writeth a sudden and "strange defeature," *they* stand erect,—riven, not uprooted,—a monument less of pity than of awe! There are some who pass through the Lazar-House of Misery with a step more august than a Cæsar's in his hall. The very things which, seen alone, are despicable and vile, associated with them, become almost venerable and divine; and one ray, however dim and feeble, of that intense holiness which, in the INFANT GOD, shed majesty over the manger and the straw, not denied to those who, in the depth of affliction, cherish His patient image, flings over the meanest localities of earth an emanation from the glory of Heaven!

CHAPTER L.

Letters from divers hands, which will absolve
Ourselves from long narration.
—*Tanner of Tyburn.*

ONE morning about a fortnight after Talbot's death, Clarence was sitting alone, thoughtful and melancholy, when the three following letters were put into his hand:—

LETTER I.

FROM THE DUKE OF HAVERFIELD.

"LET me, my dear Linden, be the first to congratulate you upon your accession, of fortune: five thousand a year, Scarsdale, and eighty thousand pounds in the funds, are very pretty foes to starvation! Ah, my

dear fellow, if you had but shot that frosty Caucasus of humanity, that pillar of the state, made not to bend, that—but you know already whom I mean, and so I will spare you more of my lamentable metaphors: had you shot Lord Borodaile, your happiness would now be complete! Everybody talks of your luck. La Meronville tending on you with her white hands, the prettiest hands in the world—who would not be wounded, even by Lord Borodaile, for such a nurse? And then Talbot's—yet, I will not speak of *that*, for you are very unlike the present generation; and who knows but you may have some gratitude, some affection, some natural feeling in you. I had once; but that was before I went to France—those Parisians, with their fine sentiments, and witty philosophy, play the devil with one's good old fashioned feelings. So Lord Aspeden is to have an Italian ministry. By-the-by, shall you go with him, or will you not rather stay at home, and enjoy your new fortunes—hunt—race—dine out—dance—vote in the House of Commons, and, in short, do all that an Englishman and a gentleman should do? *Ornamento e splendor del secol nostro.* Write me a line whenever you have nothing better to do.

"And believe me,
"Most truly yours,
"HAVERFIELD.

"Will you sell your black mare, or will you buy my brown one? *Utrum horum mavis accipe*, the only piece of Latin I remember."

LETTER FROM LORD ASPEDEN.

"MY DEAR LINDEN,

"Suffer me to enter most fully into your feeling. Death, my friend, is common to all: we must submit to its dispensations. I heard accidentally of the great fortune left you by Mr. Talbot (your father, I suppose I may venture to call him). Indeed, though there is a silly prejudice against illegitimacy, yet, as our immortal bard says,

Wherefore base?
When thy dimensions are as well compact,
Thy mind as generous and thy shape as true
As honest madam's issue!

For my part, my dear Linden, I say, on your behalf, that it is very likely that you *are* a natural son, for such are always the luckiest and the best.

"You have probably heard of the honor his Majesty has conferred me, in appointing to my administration the city of ———. As the choice of a secretary has been left to me, I need not say how happy I shall be to keep my promise to you. Indeed, as I told Lord —— yesterday morning, I do not know anywhere a young man who has more talent, or who plays better on the flute.

"Adieu, my dear young friend;
"And believe me,
"Very truly yours,
"ASPEDEN."

LETTER FROM MADAME DE LA MERONVILLE.

(Translated.)

"YOU have done me wrong—great wrong. I loved you—I waited on you—tended you—nursed you—gave all up for you; and you forsook me—forsook me without a word. True, that you have been engaged in a melancholy duty, but, at least, you had time to write a line, to cast a thought, to one who had shown for you the love that I have done. But we will pass over all this; I will not reproach you—it is beneath me. The vicious upbraid—*the virtuous forgive!* I have for several days, left your house. I should never have come to it, had you not been wounded, and, as I fondly imagined, for my sake. Return when you will, I shall no longer be there to persecute and torment you.

"Pardon this letter. I have said too much for myself—a hundred times too much to you; but I shall not sin again. This intrusion is my last.

"CECILE DE LA MERONVILLE."

These letters will, probably, suffice to clear up that part of Clarence's history which had not hitherto been touched upon; they will show that Talbot's will (after several legacies to his old servants, his nearest connections, and two charitable institutions, which he had founded, and for some years supported) had bequeathed the bulk of his property to Clarence. The words in which the bequest was made, were kind and somewhat remarkable.—"To my relation and friend, commonly known by the name of Clarence Linden, to whom I am bound alike by blood and affection," etc.—These expressions, joined to the magnitude of the bequest, the apparently unaccountable attachment of the old man to his heir, and the mystery which wrapt the origin of the latter, all concurred to give rise to an opinion, easily received, and soon universally accredited, that Clarence was a natural son of the deceased; and so strong in England is the aristocratic aversion to an unknown lineage, that this belief, unflattering as it was, procured for Linden a much higher consideration, on the score of birth, than he might otherwise have enjoyed. Furthermore will the above correspondence testify the general *éclat* of Madame La Meronville's attachment, and the construction naturally put upon it. Nor do we see much left for us to explain, with regard to the Frenchwoman herself, which cannot equally well be gleaned by any judicious and intelligent reader, from the epistle last honored by his perusal. Clarence's sense of gallantry did, indeed, smite him severely, for his negligence and ill requital to one, who, whatever her faults or follies, had at least done nothing with which *he* had a right to reproach her. It must, however, be considered, in his defence, that the fatal event which had so lately occurred, the relapse which Clarence had suffered in consequence, and the melancholy confusion and bustle in which the last

week or ten days had been passed, were quite sufficient to banish her from his remembrance. Still she was a woman, and had loved, or seemed to love; and Clarence, as he wrote to her a long, kind, and almost brotherly letter, in return for her own, felt that, in giving pain to another, one often suffers almost as much for avoiding as for committing a sin.

We have said his letter was kind—it was also frank, and yet prudent. In it he said that he had long loved another—which love alone could have rendered him insensible to her attachment; that he, nevertheless, should always recall her memory with equal interest and admiration; and then with a tact of flattery which the nature of the correspondence and the sex of the person addressed rendered excusable, he endeavored, as far as he was able, to soothe and please the vanity which the candor of his avowal was calculated to wound.

When he had finished this letter, he despatched another to Lord Aspeden, claiming a reprieve of some days before he answered the proposal of the diplomatist. After these epistolary efforts, he summoned his valet, and told him, apparently in a careless tone, to find out if Lady Westborough was still in town. Then throwing himself on the couch, he wrestled with the grief and melancholy which the death of a friend, and more than a father, might well cause in a mind less susceptible than his, and counted the dull hours crawl onward till his servant returned. "Lady Westborough and all the family had been gone a week to their seat in ——."

"Well," thought Clarence, "had *he* been alive, I could have entrusted my cause to a mediator; as it is, I will plead, or rather assert it, myself.—Harrison," said he aloud, "see that my black mare is ready by sunrise to-morrow; I shall leave town for some days."

"Not in your present state of health, sir, surely?" said Harrison, with the license of one who had been a nurse.

"My health requires it—no more words, my good Harrison, see that I am obeyed." And Harrison, shaking his head doubtfully, left the room.

"Rich, independent, free to aspire to the heights which in England are only accessible to those who join wealth to ambition, I have at least," said Clarence, proudly, "no unworthy pretensions even to the hand of Lady Flora Ardenne. If she can love me for myself, if she can trust to my honor, rely on my love, feel proud in my pride, and aspiring in my ambition, then, indeed, this wealth will be welcome to me, and the disguised name, which has cost me so many mortifications, become grateful, since she will not disdain to share it."

CHAPTER LI.

A little druid wight,
Of withered aspect; but his eye was keen
With sweetness mixed—in russet *brown* bedight.
—THOMSON'S *Castle of Indolence.*

Thus holding high discourse, they came to where
The cursed carle was at his wonted trade,
Still tempting heedless men into his snare,
In witching wise, as I before have said.—*Ibid.*

IT was a fine, joyous summer morning when Clarence set out, alone, and on horseback, upon his enterprise of love and adventure. If there be anything on earth more reviving and inspiriting than another, it is, to my taste, a bright day, a free horse, a journey of excitement before one, and loneliness! Rousseau—in his own way, a great, though rather a morbid epicure of this world's enjoyments—talks with rapture of his pedestrian rambles when in his first youth. But what are your foot-ploddings to the joy which lifts you into air with the bound of your mettled steed?

But there are times when an iron and stern sadness locks, as it were, within itself our capacities of enjoyment; and the song of the birds, and the green freshness of the summer morning, and the glad motion of the eager horse, brought neither relief nor change to the musings of the young adventurer.

He rode on for several miles without noticing anything on his road, and only now and then testifying the nature of his thoughts and his consciousness of solitude by brief and abrupt exclamations and sentences, which proclaimed the melancholy yet exciting subjects of his meditations. During the heat of the noon, he rested at a small public-house about * * * miles from town; and resolving to take his horse at least ten miles further before his day's journey ceased, he remounted towards the evening, and slowly resumed his way.

He was now entering the same county in which he first made his appearance in this history. Although several miles from the spot on which the memorable night with the gipsies had been passed, his thoughts reverted to its remembrance, and he sighed as he recalled the ardent hopes which then fed and animated his heart. While thus musing, he heard the sound of hoofs behind him, and presently came by a sober-looking man, on a rough, strong pony, laden (besides its master's weight), with saddle-bags of uncommon size, and to all appearance substantially and artfully filled.

Clarence looked, and, after a second survey, recognized the person of his old acquaintance Mr. Morris Brown.

Not equally reminiscent was the worshipful itinerant, who, in the great variety of forms and faces which it was his professional lot to encounter, could not be expected to preserve a very nice or distinguishing recollection of each.

"Your servant, sir, your servant," said Mr. Brown, as he rode his pony alongside of our traveller. "Are you going as far as W—— this evening?"

"I hardly know yet," answered Clarence; "the length of my ride depends upon my horse rather than myself."

"Oh, well, very well," said Mr. Brown: "but you will allow me, perhaps, sir, the honor of riding with you as far as you go."

"You give me much gratification by your proposal, Mr. Brown!" said Clarence.

The broker looked in surprise at his companion. "So you know me, sir!"

"I do," replied Clarence. "I am surprised that you have forgotten *me*."

Slowly Mr. Brown gazed, till at last his memory began to give itself the rousing shake—"God bless me, sir, I beg you a thousand pardons—I now remember you perfectly—Mr. Linden, the nephew of my old patroness, Mrs. Minden.—Dear, dear, how could I be so forgetful! I hope, by the by, sir, that the shirts wore well. I am thinking you will want some more. I have some capital cambric of curiously fine quality and texture, from the wardrobe of the late Lady Waddilove."

"What, Lady Waddilove still!" cried Clarence. "Why, my good friend, you will offer next to furnish me with pantaloons from her ladyship's wardrobe."

"Why, really, sir, I see you preserve your fine spirits; but I do think I have one or two pair of plum-colored velvet inexpressibles, that passed into my possession when her ladyship's husband died, which might, perhaps, with a *leetle* alteration, fit you, and at all events, would be a very elegant present from a gentleman to his valet."

"Well, Mr. Brown, whenever I or my valet wear plum-colored velvet breeches, I will certainly purchase those in your possession; but, to change the subject, can you inform me what have become of my old host and hostess, the Copperasses, of Copperas Bower?"

"Oh, sir, they are the same as ever—nice genteel people they are, too. Master Adolphus has grown into a fine young gentleman, very nearly as tall as *you* and *I* are. His worthy father preserves his jovial vein, and is very merry whenever I call there. Indeed, it was but last week that he made an admirable witticism. 'Bob,' said he—(Tom—you remember Tom, or De Warens, as Mrs. Copperas was pleased to call him—Tom is gone)—'Bob, have you stopt the coach?' 'Yes, sir,' said Bob. 'And what coach is it?' asked Mr. Copperas. 'It be the Swallow, sir,' said the boy. 'The Swallow! oh, very well,' cried Mr. Copperas; 'then, now, having swallowed in the roll, I will e'en roll in the Swallow!'—Ha! ha! ha! sir, very facetious, was it not?"

"Very, indeed," said Clarence; "and so Mr. De Warens has gone; how came that?"

"Why, sir, you see, the boy was always of a *gay turn*, and he took to frisking it, as he called it, of a night, and so he was taken up for thrashing a watchman, and appeared before Sir John, the magistrate, the next morning."

"Caractacus before Cæsar!" observed Linden; "and what said Cæsar?"

"Sir!" said Mr. Brown.

"I mean, what said Sir John?"

"Oh! he asked him his name, and Tom, whose head Mrs. Copperas (poor good woman!) had crammed with pride enough for fifty foot-boys, replied, 'De Warens,' with all the air of a man of independence. 'De Warens!' cried Sir John, amazed, 'we'll have no De's here: take him to Bridewell!' and so, Mrs. Copperas, being without a foot-boy, sent for me, and I supplied her—with *Bob!*"

"Out of the late Lady Waddilove's wardrobe too?" said Clarence.

"Ha, ha! that's well, very well, sir. No,

not exactly, but he was a son of her late ladyship's coachman. Mr. Copperas has had two other servants of the name of Bob before, but this is the biggest of all, so he humorously calls him 'Triple Bob Major!' You observe that road to the right, sir—it leads to the mansion of an old customer of mine, General Cornelius St. Leger! many a good bargain have I sold to his sister. Heaven rest her!—when she died, I lost a good friend, though she was a little hot or so, to be sure. But she had a relation, a young lady—such a lovely, noble looking creature—it did one's heart, ay, and one's eyes also, good to look at her; and she's gone too—well, well, one loses one's customers sadly; it makes me feel old and comfortless to think of it. Now, yonder, as far as you can see among those distant woods, lived another friend of mine, to whom I offered to make some very valuable presents upon his marriage with the young lady I spoke of just now, but, poor gentleman, he had not time to accept them; he lost his property by a lawsuit, a few months after he was married, and a very different person now has Mordaunt Court."

"Mordaunt Court!" cried Clarence; "do you mean to say that Mr. Mordaunt has lost that property?"

"Why, sir, one Mr. Mordaunt has lost it, and another has gained it: but the real Mr. Mordaunt has not an acre in this county or elsewhere, I fear, poor gentleman. He is universally regretted, for he was very good and very generous, though they say he was also mighty proud and reserved; but, for my part, I never perceived it. If one is not proud one's self, Mr. Linden, one is very little apt to be hurt by pride in other people."

"And where is Mr. Algernon Mordaunt?" asked Clarence, as he recalled his interview with that person, and the interest with which Algernon then inspired him.

"That, sir, is more than any of us can say. He has disappeared altogether. Some declare that he has gone abroad, others that he is living in Wales in the greatest poverty. However, wherever he is, I am sure that he cannot be rich; for the law-suit quite ruined him, and the young lady he married had not a farthing."

"Poor Mordaunt," said Clarence, musingly.

"I think, sir, that the squire would not be best pleased if he heard you pity him. I don't know why, but he certainly looked, walked, and moved like one whom you felt it very hard to pity. But I am thinking that it is a great shame that the general should not do anything for Mr. Mordaunt's wife, for she was his own flesh and blood; and I am sure *he* had no cause to be angry at her marrying a gentleman of such old family as Mr. Mordaunt. I am a great stickler for birth, sir—I learnt that from the late Lady W. 'Brown,' she said, and I shall never forget her ladyship's air when she did say it, 'Brown, respect your superiors, and never fall into the hands of the republicans and atheists!'"

"And why," said Clarence, who was much interested in Mordaunt's fate, "did General St. Leger withhold his consent?"

"That we don't exactly know, sir; but some say, that Mr. Mordaunt was very high and proud with the general, and the general was, to the full, as fond of his purse as Mr. Mordaunt could be of his pedigree—and so, I suppose, one pride clashed against the other, and made a quarrel between them."

"Would not the general, then, relent after the marriage?"

"Oh! no, sir—for it was a runaway affair. Miss Diana St. Leger, his sister, was as hot as ginger upon it, and fretted and worried the poor general, who was never of the mildest, about the match, till at last he forbade the poor young lady's very name to be mentioned. And when Miss Diana died about two years ago, he suddenly introduced a tawny sort of *cretur*, whom they call a mulatto or creole, or some such thing, into the house; and it seems that he has had several children by her, whom he never durst own during Miss Diana's life, but whom he now declares to be his heirs. Well—they rule him with a rod of iron, and suck him as dry as an orange. They are a bad, griping set, all of them; and, I am sure, I don't say so from any selfish feeling, Mr. Linden, though they have forbid me the house, and called me, to my very face, an old cheating Jew. Think of *that*, sir!—I, whom the late Lady W. in her exceeding friendship used to call 'honest Brown'—I whom your worthy—"

"And who," uncourteously interrupted Clarence, "has Mordaunt Court now?"

"Why, a distant relation of the last squire's, an elderly gentleman who calls himself Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt. I am going there tomorrow morning, for I still keep up a connec-

tion with the family. Indeed the old gentleman bought a lovely little ape of me, which I did intend as a present to the late (as I may call him) Mr. Mordaunt; so, though I will not say I exactly like him—he is a hard hand at a bargain—yet at least I will not deny him his due."

"What sort of person is he? What character does he bear?" asked Clarence.

"I really find it hard to answer that question," said the gossiping Mr. Brown. "In great things he is very lavish and ostentatious, but in small things he is very penurious and saving, and miser-like—and all for one son, who is deformed and very sickly. He seems to doat on that boy; and now I have got two or three little presents in these bags for Mr. Henry. Heaven forgive me, but when I look at the poor creature, with his face all drawn up, and his sour, ill-tempered voice, and his limbs crippled, I almost think it would be better if he were in his grave, and the rightful Mr. Mordaunt, who would then be the next of kin, in his place."

"So then, there is only this unhappy cripple between Mr. Mordaunt and the property?" said Clarence.

"Exactly so, sir. But will you let me ask where you shall put up at W——? I will wait upon you, if you will give me leave, with some very curious and valuable articles, highly desirable either for yourself or for little presents to your friends."

"I thank you," said Clarence, "I shall make no stay at W——, but I shall be glad to see you in town next week. Favor me, meanwhile, by accepting this trifle."

"Nay, nay, sir," said Mr. Brown, pocketing the money—"I really cannot accept this—anything in the way of exchange—a ring, or a seal, or—"

"No, no, not at present," said Clarence; "the night is coming on, and I shall make the best of my way. Good-bye, Mr. Brown;" and Clarence trotted off; but he had scarce got sixty yards before he heard the itinerant merchant cry out—"Mr. Linden, Mr. Linden!" and looking back he beheld the honest Brown putting his shaggy pony at full speed, in order to overtake him: so he pulled up.

"Well, Mr. Brown, what do you want?"

"Why, you see, sir, you gave me no exact answer about the plum-colored velvet inexpressibles," said Mr. Brown.

CHAPTER LII.

Are we contemned!—*The Double Marriage.*

It was dusk when Clarence arrived at the very same inn at which, more than five years ago, he had assumed his present name. As he recalled the note addressed to him, and the sum (his whole fortune) which it contained, he cold not help smiling at the change his lot had since then undergone: but the smile soon withered when he thought of the kind and paternal hand from which that change had proceeded, and knew that his gratitude was no longer availing, and that that hand, in pouring its last favors upon him, had become cold. He was ushered into No. Four, and left to his meditations till bed time.

The next day he recommenced his journey. Westborough Park was, though in another county, within a short ride of W——; but as he approached it, the character of the scenery became essentially changed. Bare, bold, and meagre, the features of the country bore somewhat of a Scottish character. On the right side of the road was a precipitous and perilous descent, and some workmen were placing posts along a path for foot passengers on that side nearest the carriage-road, probably with a view to preserve unwary coachmen or equestrians from the dangerous vicinity to the descent, which a dark night might cause them to incur. As Clarence looked idly on the workmen, and painfully on the crumbling and fearful descent I have described, he little thought that that spot would, a few years after, become the scene of a catastrophe affecting in the most powerful degree the interests of his future life. Our young traveller put up his horse at a small inn, bearing the Westborough arms, and situated at a short distance from the park gates. Now that he was so near his mistress—now that less than an hour, nay, than the fourth part of an hour, might place him before her, and decide his fate, his heart, which had hitherto sustained him, grew faint, and presented, first fear, then anxiety, and, at last, despondency to his imagination and forebodings.

"At all events," said he, "I will see her alone before I will confer with her artful and proud mother, or her cipher of a father. I will then tell her all my history, and open to her all my secrets: I will only conceal from her my

present fortunes, for even if rumor should have informed her of them, it will be easy to give the report no sanction; I have a right to that trial. When she is convinced that, at least, neither my birth nor character can disgrace her, I shall see if her love can enable her to overlook my supposed poverty, and to share my uncertain lot. If so, there will be some triumph in undeceiving her error and rewarding her generosity: if not, I shall be saved from involving my happiness with that of one who looks only to my worldly possessions. I owe it to her, it is true, to show her that I am no low-born pretender; but I owe it also to myself to ascertain if my own individual qualities are sufficient to gain her hand."

Fraught with these ideas, which were natural enough to a man whose peculiar circumstances were well calculated to make him feel rather soured and suspicious, and whose pride had been severely wounded by the contempt with which his letter had been treated—Clarence walked into the park, and, hovering around the house, watched and waited that opportunity of addressing Lady Flora, which he trusted her habits of walking would afford him; but hours rolled away, the evening set in, and Lady Flora had not once quitted the house.

More disappointed and sick at heart than he liked to confess, Clarence returned to his inn, took his solitary meal, and strolling once more into the park, watched beneath the windows till midnight, endeavoring to guess which were the casements of her apartments, and feeling his heart beat high at every light which flashed forth, and disappeared, and every form which flitted across the windows of the great staircase. Little did Lady Flora, as she sat in her room alone, and, in tears, mused over Clarence's fancied worthlessness and infidelity, and told her heart again and again that she loved no more—little did she know whose eye kept vigils without, or whose feet brushed away the rank dews beneath her windows, or whose thoughts, though not altogether unmingled with reproach, were riveted with all the ardor of a young and first love upon her.

It was unfortunate for Linden that he had no opportunity of personally pleading his suit; his altered form and faded countenance would at least have insured a hearing and an interest for his honest though somewhat haughty sincerity; but though that day, and the next, and the next, were passed, in the most anxious and unremitting vigilance, Clarence only once caught a glimpse of Lady Flora, and then she was one amidst a large party; and Clarence, fearful of a premature and untimely discovery, was forced to retire into the thicknesses of the park, and lose the solitary reward of his watches almost as soon as he had won it.

Wearied and racked by his suspense, and despairing of obtaining any favorable opportunity for an interview, without such a request, Clarence at last resolved to write to Lady Flora, entreating her assent to a meeting, in which he pledged himself to clear up all that had hitherto seemed doubtful in his conduct or mysterious in his character. Though respectful, urgent, and bearing the impress of truth and feeling, the tone of the letter was certainly that of a man who conceived he had a right to a little resentment for the past, and a little confidence for the future. It was what might well be written by one who imagined his affection had once been returned, but would as certainly have been deemed very presumptuous by a lady who thought that the affection itself was a liberty.

Having penned this epistle, the next care was how to convey it. After much deliberation, it was at last committed to the care of a little girl, the daughter of the lodge-keeper, whom Lady Flora thrice a week personally instructed in the mysteries of spelling, reading, and calligraphy. With many injunctions to deliver the letter only to the hands of the beautiful teacher, Clarence trusted his despatches to the little scholar, and, with a trembling frame, and wistful eye, watched Susan take her road, with her green satchel and her shining cheeks, to the great house.

One hour, two hours, three hours, passed, and the messenger had not returned. Restless and impatient, Clarence walked back to his inn, and had not been there many minutes before a servant, in the Westborough livery, appeared at the door of the humble hostelry, and left the following letter for his perusal and gratification.

"SIR,

"The letter intended for my daughter, has just been given to me by Lady Westborough. I know not what gave rise to the language, or the very extraordinary request for a clandestine meeting, which you have thought proper to address to Lady Flora Ardenne; but you will allow me to observe, that if you intend to con-

fer upon my daughter the honor of a matrimonial proposal, she fully concurs with me and her mother in the negative which I feel necessitated to put upon your obliging offer.

"I need not add that all correspondence with my daughter must close here. I have the honor to be,

"Sir,

"Your very obedient servant,

"WESTBOROUGH."

"Westborough Park.

"To Clarence Linden, Esq."

Had Clarence's blood been turned to fire, his veins could not have swelled and burnt with a fiercer heat than they did, as he read the above letter—a masterpiece, perhaps, in the line of what may be termed the "d——d civil" of epistolary favors. "Insufferable arrogance!" he muttered within his teeth. "I will live to repay it. Perfidious, unfeeling woman—what an escape I have had of her!—Now, now, I am on the world, and alone, thank Heaven. I will accept Aspeden's offer, and leave this country; when I return, it shall not be as a humble suitor to Lady Flora Ardenne. Pish! how the name sickens me: but come, I have a father—at least a nominal one. He is old and weak, and may die before I return. I will see him once more, and then, hey for Italy! Oh! I am so happy—so happy at my freedom and escape. What, ho!—waiter!—my horse instantly!"

CHAPTER LIII.

Lucr.—What has thy father done?
Beat.—What have I done?
Am I not innocent?—*The Cenci.*

THE twilight was darkening slowly over a room of noble dimensions, and costly fashion. Although it was the height of summer, a low fire burnt in the grate; and, stretching his hands over the feeble flame, an old man, of about sixty, sate in an arm chair, curiously carved with armorial bearings. The dim, yet fitful flame, cast its upward light upon a countenance, stern, haughty, and repellent, where the passions of youth and manhood had dug themselves graves in many an iron line and deep furrow: the forehead, though high, was narrow and compressed—the brows sullenly overhung the eyes, and the nose, which was singularly prominent and decided, age had sharpened, and brought out, as it were, till it gave a subborn and very forbidding expression to the more sunken features over which it rose with exaggerated dignity. Two bottles of wine, a few dried preserves, and a water glass, richly chased, and ornamented with gold, showed that the inmate of the apartment had passed the hour of the principal repast, and his loneliness at a time usually social, seemed to indicate that few olive branches were accustomed to overshadow his table.

The windows of the dining-room reached to the ground, and without, the closing light just enabled one to see a thick copse of wood, which, at a very brief interval of turf, darkened immediately opposite the house. While the old man was thus bending over the fire and conning his evening contemplations, a figure stole from the copse I have mentioned, and approaching the window, looked pryingly into the apartment; then with a noiseless hand it opened the spring of the casement, which was framed on a peculiar and old-fashioned construction, that required a practised and familiar touch—entered the apartment, and crept on, silent and unperceived by the inhabitant of the room, till it paused and stood motionless, with folded arms, scarce three steps behind the high back of the old man's chair.

In a few minutes the latter moved from his position, and slowly rose; the abruptness with which he turned, brought the dark figure of the intruder full and suddenly before him: he started back, and cried in an alarmed tone—"Who is there?"

The stranger made no reply.

The old man, in a voice in which anger and pride mingled with fear, repeated the question. The figure advanced, dropped the cloak in which it was wrapped, and presenting the features of Clarence Linden, said, in a low but clear tone,

"Your son."

The old man dropped his hold of the bell rope, which he had just before seized, and leaned as if for support against the oak wainscot; Clarence approached.

"Yes!" said he, mournfully, "your unfortunate, your offending, but your guiltless son. More than five years I have been banished from your house. I have been thrown, while yet a boy, without friends, without guidance, without name, upon the wide world,

and to the mercy of chance. I come now to you as a man, claiming no assistance and uttering no reproach, but to tell you that him whom an earthly father rejected, God has preserved; that without one unworthy or debasing act, I have won for myself the friends who support, and the wealth which dignifies, life,—since it renders it independent. Through all the disadvantages I have struggled against, I have preserved, unimpaired, my honor, and unsullied my conscience; you have disowned, but you might have claimed me without shame. Father, these hands are clean!"

A strong and evident emotion shook the old man's frame. He raised himself to his full height, which was still tall and commanding, and in a voice, the natural harshness of which was rendered yet more repellent by passion, replied, "Boy! your presumption is insufferable. What to me is your wretched fate? Go—go—go to your miserable mother; find her out—claim kindred there; live together, toil together, rot together; but come not to me!—disgrace to my house—ask not admittance to my affections; the law may give you my name, but sooner would I be torn piece-meal than own your right to it. If you want money, name the sum, take it; cut up my fortune to shreds—seize my property—revel on it—but come not *here*. This house is sacred; pollute it not: I disown you; I discard you; I—ay, I detest—I loathe you!"

And with these words, which came forth as if heaved from the inmost heart of the speaker, who shook with the fury he endeavored to stifle, he fell back into his chair, and fixed his eyes, which glared fearfully through the increasing darkness upon Linden, who stood high, erect, and sorrowfully before him.

"Alas, my lord!" said Clarence, with mournful bitterness, "have not the years which have seared your form and whitened your locks brought some meekness to your rancor, some mercy to your injustice, for one whose only crime against you seems to have been his birth. But I said I came not to reproach—nor do I. Many a bitter hour, many a pang of shame, and mortification, and misery, which have made scars in my heart that will never wear away, my wrongs have cost me—but let them pass. Let them not swell your future and last account whenever it be required. I am about to leave this county, with a heavy and foreboding heart; we may never meet again on earth. I have no longer any wish, any chance of resuming the name you have deprived me of. I shall never trust myself on your relationship, or cross your view. Lavish your wealth upon him whom you have placed so immeasurably above me in your affections. But I have not deserved your curse, father; give me your blessing, and let me depart in peace."

"Peace! and what peace have I had?—what respite from gnawing shame, the foulness and leprosy of humiliation and reproach, since—since—? But this is not your fault, you say: no, no—it is another's; and you are only the mark of my stigma, my disgrace, not its perpetrator. Ha! a nice distinction, truly. My blessing, you say! Come, kneel; kneel, boy, and have it!"

Clarence approached, and stood bending and bare-headed before his father, but he knelt not.

"Why do you not kneel," cried the old man, vehemently.

"It is the attitude of the injurer, not of the injured!" said Clarence, firmly.

"Injured!—innocent reprobate—is it not I who am injured?—do you not read it in my brow—here, here?" and the old man struck his clenched hand violently against his temples. "Was I not injured?"—(he continued, sinking his voice into a key unnaturally low)—"did I not trust implicity?—did I not give up my heart without suspicion?—was I not duped deliciously?—was I not kind enough, blind enough, fool enough—and was I not betrayed—damnably, filthily betrayed? But that was *no* injury. Was not my old age turned, a sapless tree, a poisoned spring?—were not my days made a curse to me, and my nights a torture?—was I not, am I not, a mock, and a bye-word, and a miserable, impotent, unavenged old man? Injured!—But this is no injury!—Boy, boy, what are your wrongs to mine?"

"Father!" cried Clarence, deprecatingly, "I am not the cause of your wrongs: is it just that the innocent should suffer for the guilty?"

"Speak not in that voice!" cried the old man—"that voice!—fie, fie on it. Hence! away!—away, boy!—why tarry you?—My son, and have that voice?—Pooh, you are *not* my son. Ha, ha!—*my* son!"

"What am I, then?" said Clarence, soothingly; for he was shocked and grieved, rather

than irritated, by a wrath which partook so strongly of insanity.

"I will tell you," cried the father—"I will tell you what you are—you are my curse!"

"Farewell!" said Clarence, much agitated, and retiring to the window by which he had entered; "may your heart never smite you for your cruelty! Farewell!—may the blessing you have withheld from me be with you!"

"Stop!—stay!" cried the father; for his fury was checked for one moment, and his nature, fierce as it was, relented: but Clarence was already gone, and the miserable old man was left alone to darkness, and solitude, and the passions which can make a hell of the human heart!

CHAPTER LIV.

Sed quæ præclara, et prospera tanti,
Ut rebus lætis par sit mensura malorum.*
—JUVENAL.

WE are now transported to a father and a son of a very different stamp.

It was about the hour of one, P. M., when the door of Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt's study was thrown open, and the servant announced Mr. Brown.

"Your servant, sir—your servant, Mr. Henry," said the itinerant, bowing low to the two gentlemen thus addressed. The former, Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt, might be about the same age as Linden's father. A shrewd, sensible, ambitious man of the world, he had made his way from the state of a younger brother, with no fortune and very little interest, to considerable wealth, besides the property he had acquired by law, and to a degree of consideration for general influence and personal ability, which, considering he had no official or parliamentary rank, very few of his equals enjoyed. Persevering, steady, crafty, and possessing, to an eminent degree, that happy art of '*canting*' which opens the readiest way to character and consequence, the rise and reputation of Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt appeared less to be wondered at than envied; yet, even envy was only for those who could not look beyond the surface of things. He was at heart an anxious and unhappy man. The evil we do in the world is often paid back in the bosom of home. Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt was, like Crauford, what might be termed a mistaken utilitarian: he had lived utterly and invariably for self; but instead of uniting self-interest with the interest of others, he considered them as perfectly incompatible ends. But character was among the greatest of all objects to him; so that, though he had rarely deviated into what might fairly be termed a virtue, he had never transgressed what might rigidly be called a propriety. He had not the aptitude, the wit, the moral audacity of Crauford: he could not have indulged in one offence with impunity, by a mingled courage and hypocrisy in veiling others—he was the slave of the forms which Crauford subjugated to himself. He was only so far resembling Crauford, as one man of the world resembles another in selfishness and dissimulation: he could be dishonest, not villainous, much less a villain upon system. He was a *canter*, Crauford a *hypocrite:* his uttered opinions were, like Crauford's, differing from his conduct; but he *believed* the truth of the former even while sinning in the latter: he canted so sincerely that the tears came in his eyes when he spoke. Never was there a man more exemplary in words: people who departed from him went away impressed with the idea of an excess of honor—a plethora of conscience. "It was almost a pity," said they, "that Mr. Vavasour was so romantic;" and thereupon they named him as executor to their wills and guardian to their sons. None but he could, in carrying the lawsuit againt Mordaunt, have lost nothing in reputation by success. But there was something so specious, so ostensibly fair in his manner and words, while he was ruining Mordaunt, that it was impossible not to suppose he was actuated by the purest motives, the most holy desire for justice—not for himself, he said, for he was old, and already rich enough,—but for his son! From that son came the punishment of all his offences—the black drop at the bottom of a bowl, seemingly so sparkling. To him, as the father grew old, and desirous of quiet, Vavasour had transferred all his selfishness, as if to a securer and more durable firm. The child, when young, had been singularly handsome and intelligent; and Vavasour,

* But what excellence or prosperity so great that there should be an equal measure of evils for our joys.

he toiled and toiled at his ingenious and graceful cheateries, pleased himself with anticipating the importance and advantages the heir to his labors would enjoy. For that son he certainly *had* persevered more arduously than otherwise he might have done in the lawsuit, of the justice of which he better satisfied the world than his own breast; for that son he rejoiced as he looked around the stately halls and noble domain from which the rightful possessor had been driven; for that son he extended economy into penuriousness, and hope into anxiety; and, too old to expect much more from the world himself, for that son he anticipated, with a wearing and feverish fancy, whatever wealth could purchase, beauty win, or intellect command.

But as if, like the Castle of Otranto, there was something in Mordaunt Court which contained a penalty and a doom for the usurper, no sooner had Vavasour possessed himself of his kinsman's estate, than the prosperity of his life dried and withered away, like Jonah's gourd, in a single night. His son, at the age of thirteen, fell from a scaffold, on which the workmen were making some extensive alterations in the old house, and became a cripple and a valetudinarian for life. But still Vavasour, always of a sanguine temperament, cherished a hope that surgical assistance might restore him: from place to place, from professor to professor, from quack to quack, he carried the unhappy boy, and as each remedy failed he was only the more impatient to devise a new one. But as it was the mind as well as person of his son in which the father had stored up his ambition; so, in despite of this fearful accident, and the wretched health by which it was followed, Vavasour never suffered his son to rest from the tasks, and tuitions, and lectures of the various masters by whom he was surrounded.

The poor boy, it is true, deprived of physical exertion, and naturally of a serious disposition, required very little urging to second his father's wishes for his mental improvement; and as the tutors were all of the orthodox university calibre, who imagine that there is no knowledge (but vanity) in any other works than those in which their own education has consisted; so Henry Vavasour became at once the victor and victim of Bentleys and Scaligers, word-weighers and metre-scanners, till, utterly ignorant of everything which could have softened his temper, dignified his misfortunes, and reconciled him to his lot, he was sinking fast into the grave, soured by incessant pain into moroseness, envy, and bitterness; exhausted by an unwholesome and useless application to unprofitable studies; an excellent scholar (as it is termed), with the worst regulated and worst informed mind of almost any of his contemporaries equal to himself in the advantages of ability, original goodness of disposition, and the costly and profuse expenditure of education.

But the vain father, as he heard, on all sides, of his son's talents, saw nothing sinister in their direction; and though the poor boy grew daily more contracted in mind and broken in frame, Vavasour yet hugged more and more closely to his breast the hope of ultimate cure for the latter, and future glory for the former. So he went on heaping money, and extending acres, and planting, and improving, and building, and hoping, and anticipating, for one at whose very feet the grave was already dug!

But we left Mr. Brown in the study, making his bow and professions of service to Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt and his son.

"Good day, *honest* Brown," said the former, a middle-sized and rather stout man, with a well-powdered head, and a sharp, shrewd, and very sallow countenance; "good day—have you brought any of the foreign *liqueurs* you spoke of, for Mr. Henry?"

"Yes, sir, I have some curiously fine *eau d'or* and *liqueur des îles*, besides the *marasquino* and *curacoa*. The late Lady Waddilove honored my taste in these matters with her especial approbation."

"My dear boy," said Vavasour, turning to his son, who lay extended on the couch, reading, *not* the Prometheus (that most noble drama ever created), *but the notes upon it*—"my dear boy, as you are fond of *liqueurs*, I desired Brown to get some peculiarly fine; perhaps——"

"Pish!" said the son, fretfully interrupting him, "do, I beseech you, take your hand off my shoulder. See now, you have made me lose my place. I really do wish you would leave me alone for one moment in the day."

"I beg your pardon, Henry," said the father, looking reverently on the Greek characters which his son preferred to the newspaper. "It is very vexatious, I own; but do taste

these *liqueurs*. Dr. Lukewarm said you might have everything you liked—"

"But quiet!" muttered the cripple.

"I assure you, sir," said the wandering merchant, "that they are excellent; allow me, Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt, to ring for a corkscrew. I really do think, sir, that Mr. Henry looks much better—I declare he has quite a color."

"No, indeed!" said Vavasour, eagerly. "Well, it seems to *me*, too, that he is getting better. I intend him to try Mr. E——'s patent collar in a day or two; but that will in some measure prevent his reading. A great pity: for I am very anxious that he should lose no time in his studies just at present. He goes to Cambridge in October."

"Indeed, sir. Well, he will set the town in a blaze, I guess, sir! Every body says what a fine scholar Mr. Henry is—even in the servants' hall!"

"Ay, ay," said Vavasour, gratified even by this praise, "he is clever enough, Brown; and, what is more" (and here Vavasour's look grew sanctified), "he is good enough. His principles do equal honor to his head and heart. He would be no son of mine if he were not as much the gentleman as the scholar."

The youth lifted his heavy and distorted face from his book, and a sneer raised his lip for a moment; but a sudden spasm of pain seizing him, the expression changed, and Vavasour, whose eyes were fixed upon him, hastened to his assistance.

"Throw open the window, Brown; ring the bell—call—"

"Pooh, father," cried the boy, with a sharp, angry voice, "I am not going to die yet, nor faint either; but it is all your fault. If you *will* have those odious, vulgar people here for *your own* pleasure, at least suffer me, another day, to retire."

"My son, my son!" said the grieved father, in reproachful anger, "it was my anxiety to give you some trifling enjoyment that brought Brown here—you must be sensible of that!"

"You tease me to death," grumbled the peevish unfortunate.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Brown, "shall I leave the bottles here? or do you please that I should give them to the butler? I see that I am displeasing and troublesome to Mr. Henry; but as my worthy friend and patroness, the late Lady—"

"Go—go—honest Brown!" said Vavasour (who desired every man's good word),—"go, and give the *liqueurs* to Preston. Mr. Henry is extremely sorry that he is too unwell to see you now; and I—I have the heart of a father for his sufferings."

Mr. Brown withdrew. "'Odious and vulgar,'" said he to himself, in a little fury—for Mr. Brown peculiarly valued himself on his gentility—"'odious and vulgar!' To think of his little *lordship* uttering such shameful words! However, I will go into the steward's room, and abuse him there. But, I suppose, I shall get no dinner in this house—no, not so much as a crust of bread; for while the old gentleman is launching out into such prodigious expenses on a great scale—making heathenish temples, and spoiling the fine old house with his new picture gallery and nonsense—he is so close in small matters, that I warrant not a candle-end escapes him—griping and pinching, and squeezing with one hand, and scattering money, as if it were dirt, with the other—and all for that cross, ugly, deformed, little whipper-snapper of a son. 'Odious and vulgar,' indeed! What shocking language! Mr. Algernon Mordaunt would never have made use of such words, I know. And, bless me, now I think of it, I wonder where that poor gentleman is—the young heir here is not long for this world, I can see; and who knows but what Mr. Algernon may be in great distress; and I am sure, as far as four hundred pounds, or even a thousand, go, I would not mind lending it him, only upon the post-obits of Squire Vavasour and his hopeful. I like doing a kind thing; and Mr. Algernon was always very good to me; and I am sure I don't care about the security, though I think it will be as sure as sixpence; for the old gentleman must be past sixty, and the young one is the worse life of the two. And when he's gone—what relation so near as Mr. Algernon? We should help one another—it is but one's duty: and if he is in great distress he would not mind a handsome premium. Well, nobody can say Morris Brown is not as charitable as the best Christian breathing; and as the late Lady Waddilove very justly observed, 'Brown, believe me, a prudent risk is the surest gain!' I will lose no time in finding the late squire out."

Muttering over these reflections, Mr. Brown took his way to the steward's room.

CHAPTER LV.

Clar.—How, two letters?—*The Lover's Progress.*

LETTER FROM CLARENCE LINDEN, ESQ., TO THE DUKE OF HAVERFIELD.

Hotel ——, Calais.

"MY DEAR DUKE,—After your kind letter, you will forgive me for not having called upon you before I left England—for you have led me to hope that I may dispense with ceremony towards you; and, in sad and sober earnest, I was in no mood to visit even you during the few days I was in London, previous to my departure. Some French philosopher has said that, 'the best compliment we can pay our friends, when in sickness or misfortune, is to avoid them.' I will not say how far I disagree with this sentiment: but I know that a French philosopher will be an unanswerable authority with you; and so I will take shelter even under the battery of an enemy.

"I am waiting here for some days, in expectation of Lord Aspeden's arrival. Sick as I was of England, and all that has lately occurred to me there, I was glad to have an opportunity of leaving it sooner than my chief could do; and I amuse myself very indifferently in this dull town, with reading all the morning, plays all the evening, and dreams of my happier friends all the night.

"And so you are sorry that I did not destroy Lord Borodaile. My dear duke, you would have been much more sorry if I had! What could you then have done for a living Pasquin for your stray lampoons and vagrant sarcasms? Had an unfortunate bullet carried away

That peer of England—pillar of the state,

as you term him, pray *on* whom could 'Duke Humphrey unfold his griefs?'—Ah, duke, better as it is, believe me; and, whenever you are at a loss for a subject for wit, you will find cause to bless my forbearance, and congratulate yourself upon the existence of its object.

"Dare I hope that, amidst all the gaieties which court you, you will find time to write to me? If so, you shall have in return the earliest intelligence of every new soprano, and the most elaborate criticisms on every budding figurante of our court.

"Have you met Trollolop lately—and in what new pursuit are his intellectual energies engaged? There, you see, I have fairly entrapped your Grace into a question, which common courtesy will oblige you to answer.

"Adieu, ever, my dear duke,
"Most truly yours, etc."

LETTER FROM THE DUKE OF HAVERFIELD TO CLARENCE LINDEN, ESQ.

"A THOUSAND thanks, *mon cher*, for your letter, though it was certainly less amusing and animated than I could have wished it for your sake, as well as my own; yet it could not have been more welcomely received, had it been as witty as your conversation itself. I heard that you had accepted the place of secretary to Lord Aspeden, and that you had passed through London on your way to the continent, looking—(the amiable Callythorpe, 'who never flatters,' is my authority)—more like a ghost than yourself. So you may be sure, my dear Linden, that I was very anxious to be convinced, under your own hand, of your carnal existence.

"Take care of yourself, my good fellow, and don't imagine, as I am apt to do, that youth is like my hunter, Fearnought, and will carry you over everything. In return for your philosophical maxim, I will give you another. 'In age we should remember that we *have been* young, and in youth, that we are *to be* old.'—Ehem!—am I not profound as a moralist? I think a few such sentences would become my long face well; and, to say truth, I am tired of being witty—every one thinks he can be that—so I will borrow Trollolop's philosophy—take snuff, wear a wig out of curl, and grow wise instead of merry.

"Apropos of Trollolop; let me not forget that you honor him with your inquiries. I saw him three days since, and he asked me if I had been impressed lately with the idea vulgarly called Clarence Linden; and he then proceeded to inform me that he had heard the atoms which composed your frame were about to be resolved into a new form. While I was knitting my brows very wisely at this intelligence, he passed on to apprise me that I had neither length, breadth, nor extension, nor any thing but mind. Flattered by so delicate a compliment to my understanding, I yielded my assent; and he then shifted his ground, and told me that there was no such thing as mind—that we were but modifications of matter—and that, in a word, I was all body. I took advantage of this doctrine, and forthwith removed my modification of matter from his.

"Findlater has just lost his younger brother in a duel. You have no idea how shocking it was. Sir Christopher one day heard his brother, who had just entered the —— dragoons, ridiculed for his want of spirit, by Major Elton, who professed to be the youth's best friend—the honest heart of our worthy baronet was shocked beyond measure at this perfidy, and the next time his brother mentioned Elton's name with praise, out came the story. You may guess the rest: young Findlater called out Elton, who shot him through the lungs!—'I did it for the best,' cried Sir Christopher.

"*La pauvre petite Meronville!*—What an Ariadne! Just as I was thinking to play the Bacchus to your Theseus, up steps an old gentleman from Yorkshire, who hears it is fashionable to marry *bonas robas*, proposes honorable matrimony, and deprives me and the world of La Meronville! The wedding took place on Monday last, and the happy pair set out to their seat in the North. Verily, we shall have quite a new race in the next generation—I expect all the babes will skip into the world, with a *pas de zephyr*, singing in sweet trebles—

Little dancing loves we are!
—Who the deuce is our papa?

"I think you will be surprised to hear that Lord Borodaile is beginning to thaw—I saw him smile the other day! Certainly, we are not so near the North Pole as we were! He is going, and so am I in the course of the autumn, to your old friends, the Westboroughs. Report says that he is *un peu epris de la belle Flore;* but, then, Report is such a liar!—For my own part I always contradict her.

"I eagerly embrace your offer of correspondence, and assure you that there are few people by whose friendship I conceive myself so much honored as by yours. You will believe this; for you know that, like Callythorpe, I never flatter.—Farewell for the present.

"Sincerely yours,
"HAVERFIELD."

CHAPTER LIV.

Q. Eliz.—Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?
K. Rich.—Ay, if the devil tempt thee to do good.
Q. Eliz.—Shall I forget myself to be myself?
—SHAKSPEARE.

IT wanted one hour to midnight, as Crauford walked slowly to the lonely and humble street where he had appointed his meeting with Glendower. It was a stormy and fearful night. The day had been uncommonly sultry, and as it died away, thick masses of cloud came laboring along the air, which lay heavy and breathless, as if under a spell—as if in those dense and haggard vapors the rider of the storm sat, like an incubus, upon the atmosphere beneath, and paralyzed the motion and wholesomeness of the sleeping winds. And about the hour of twilight, or rather when twilight should have been, instead of its quiet star, from one obscure corner of the heavens flashed a solitary gleam of lightning, lingered a moment,

And ere a man had power to say, Behold!
The jaws of darkness did devour it up.

But then, as if awakened from a torpor by a signal universally acknowledged, from the courts and quarters of heaven, came, blaze after blaze, and peal upon peal, the light and voices of the Elements when they walk abroad. The rain fell not: all was dry and arid: the mood of Nature seemed not gentle enough for tears: and the lightning, livid and forked, flashed from the sullen clouds with a deadly fierceness, made trebly perilous by the panting drought and stagnation of the air. The streets were empty and silent, as if the huge city had been doomed and delivered to the wrath of the tempest—and ever and anon the lighthings paused upon the housetops, shook and quivered as if meditating their stroke, and then, baffled, as it were, by some superior and guardian agency, vanished into their gloomy tents, and made their next descent from some opposite corner of the skies.

It was a remarkable instance of the force with which a cherished object occupies the thoughts, and of the all-sufficiency of the human mind to itself, the slowness and unconsciousness of danger with which Crauford, a man luxurious as well as naturally timid, moved amidst the angry fires of heaven, and brooded, undisturbed, and sullenly serene, over the project at his heart.

"A rare night for our meeting," thought he, "I suppose he will not fail me. Now let me con over my task. I must not tell him all yet. Such babes must be led into error before they can walk—just a little inkling will suffice—a glimpse into the arcana of my scheme. Well, it is indeed fortunate that I met him, for verily I am surrounded with danger, and a very little delay in the assistance I am forced to seek might exalt me to a higher elevation than the peerage."

Such was the meditation of this man, as with a slow, shuffling walk, characteristic of his mind, he proceeded to the appointed spot.

A cessation of unusual length in the series of the lightnings, and the consequent darkness, against which the dull and scanty lamps vainly struggled, prevented Crauford and another figure, approaching from the opposite quarter, seeing each other till they almost touched.—Crauford stopped abruptly.

"Is it you?" said he.

"It is a man who has outlived fortune!" answered Glendower, in the exaggerated and metaphorical language which the thoughts of men who imagine warmly, and are excited powerfully, so often assume.

"Then," rejoined Crauford, "you are the more suited for my purpose. A little urging of necessity behind is a marvellous whetter of the appetite to danger before.—He! he!" And as he said this, his low, chuckling laugh jarringly enough contrasted with the character of the night and his companion.

Glendower replied not: a pause ensued; and the lightning, which, spreading on a sudden from east to west, hung over the city a burning and ghastly canopy,—showed the face of each to the other, working, and almost haggard, as it was, with the conception of dark thoughts, and rendered wan and unearthly by the spectral light in which it was beheld. "It is an awful night!" said Glendower.

"True," answered Crauford—"a very awful night; but we were all safe under the care of Providence.—Jesus! what a flash!—Think you it is a favorable opportunity for our conversation?"

"Why not?" said Glendower; "what have the thunders and wrath of Heaven to do with us?"

"H—e—m! h—e—m! God sees all things," rejoined Crauford, "and avenges himself on the guilty by his storms!"

"Ay; but those are the storms of the heart! I tell you that even the innocent may have that within to which the loudest tempests without are peace! But guilt, you say—what have *we* to do with guilt?"

Crauford hesitated, and, avoiding any reply to this question, drew Glendower's arm within his own,and, in a low half-whispered tone said—

"Glendower, survey mankind; look with a passionless and unprejudiced eye upon the scene which moves around us: what do you see any where but the same re-acted and eternal law of nature—all, all preying upon each other? Or if there be a solitary individual who refrains, he is as a man without a common badge, without a marriage garment, and the rest trample him under foot! Glendower, *you* are such a man! Now hearken, I will deceive you not; I honor you too much to beguile you, even to your own good. I own to you, fairly and at once, that in the scheme I shall unfold to you, there may be something repugnant to the factitious and theoretical principles of education—something hostile to the prejudices, though not to the reasonings, of the mind; but—"

"Hold!" said Glendower abruptly, pausing and fixing his bold and searching eye upon the tempter; "hold!—there will be no need of argument or refinement in this case; tell me at once your scheme, and at once I will accept or reject it!"

"Gently," answered Crauford: "to all deeds of contract there is a preamble. Listen to me yet farther: when I have ceased, I will listen to you. It is in vain that you place man in cities—it is in vain that you fetter him with laws—it is in vain that you pour into his mind the light of an imperfect morality, of a glimmering wisdom, of an ineffectual religion: in all places he is the same—the same savage and crafty being, who makes the passions which rule himself the tools of his conquest over others! There is in all creation but one evident law—self-preservation! Split it as you like into hairbreadths and atoms, it is still fundamentally and essentially unaltered. Glendower, that self-preservation is our bond now. Of myself I do not at present speak—I refer only to you: self-preservation commands you to place implicit confidence in me; it impels you to abjure indigence, by accepting the proposal I am about to make to you."

"You, as yet, speak enigmas," said Glendower; "but they are sufficiently clear to tell me their sense is not such as I have heard you utter."

"You are right. Truth is not always safe—safe either to others, or to ourselves! But I dare open to you now my real heart: look in it—I dare to say that you will behold charity, benevolence, piety to God, love and friendship at this moment to yourself; but I own, also, that you will behold there a determination—which, to me, seems courage—not to be the only idle being in the world, where all are busy; or worse still, to be the only one engaged in a perilous and uncertain game, and yet shunning to employ all the arts of which he is master. I will own to you that, long since, had I been foolishly inert, I should have been, at this moment, more penniless and destitute than yourself. I live happy, respected, wealthy! I enjoy in their widest range the blessings of life. I dispense those blessings to others. Look round the world—whose name stands fairer than mine? whose hand relieves more of human distresses? whose tongue preaches purer doctrines? None, Glendower, none. I offer to you means not dissimilar to those I have chosen—fortunes not unequal to those I possess. Nothing but the most unjustifiable fastidiousness will make you hesitate to accept my offer."

"You cannot expect that I have met you this night with a resolution to be unjustifiably fastidious," said Glendower, with a hollow and cold smile.

Crauford did not immediately answer, for he was considering whether it was yet the time for disclosing the important secret. While he was deliberating, the sullen clouds began to break from their suspense. A double darkness gathered around, and a few large drops fell on the ground in token of a more general discharge about to follow from the floodgates of heaven. The two men moved onward, and took shelter under an old arch. Crauford first broke silence. "Hist," said he—"hist—do you hear anything?"

"Yes! I heard the winds and the rain, and the shaking houses, and the plashing pavements, and the reeking housetops—nothing more."

Looking long and anxiously around to certify himself that none was indeed the witness of their conference, Crauford approached close to Glendower, and laid his hand heavily upon his arm. At that moment a vivid and lengthened flash of lightning shot through the ruined arch, and gave to Crauford's countenance a lustre which Glendower almost started to behold. The face, usually so smooth, calm, bright in complexion, and almost inexpressive from its extreme composure, now agitated by the excitement of the moment, and tinged by the ghastly light of the skies, became literally fearful. The cold blue eye glared out from its socket—the lips blanched, and, parting in act to speak, showed the white glistening teeth; and the corners of the mouth, drawn down in a half sneer, gave to the cheeks, rendered green and livid by the lightning, a lean and hollow appearance, contrary to their natural shape.

"It is," said Crauford, in a whispered but distinct tone, "a perilous secret that I am about to disclose to you. I indeed have no concern in it, but my lords the judges have, and you will not therefore be surprised if I forestall the ceremonies of their court, and require an oath."

Then, his manner and voice suddenly changing into an earnest and deep solemnity, as excitement gave him an eloquence more impressive, because unnatural to his ordinary moments, he continued: "By those lightnings and commotions above—by the heavens in which they revel in their terrible sports—by the earth, whose towers they crumble, and herbs they blight, and creatures they blast into cinders at their will—by Him whom, whatever be the name He bears, all men in the living world worship and tremble before—by whatever is sacred in this great and mysterious universe, and at the peril of whatever can wither, and destroy, and curse—swear to preserve inviolable and forever the secret I shall whisper to your ear!"

The profound darkness which now, in the pause of the lightning, wrapt the scene, hid from Crauford all sight of the effect he had produced, and even the very outline of Glendower's figure: but the gloom made more distinct the voice which thrilled through it upon Crauford's ear.

"Promise me that there is not dishonor, nor crime, which is dishonor, in this confidence, and I swear."

Crauford ground his teeth. He was about to reply impetuously, but he checked himself. "I am not going," thought he, "to communicate my own share of this plot, but merely to state that a plot does exist, and then to point out in what manner he can profit by it—so far, therefore, there is no guilt in his concealment, and, consequently, no excuse for him to break his vow."

Rapidly running over this self-argument, he said aloud—"I promise!"

"And," rejoined Glendower, "I swear!"

At the close of this sentence another flash of lightning again made darkness visible, and Glendower, beholding the countenance of his companion, again recoiled; for its mingled haggardness and triumph seemed to his excited imagination the very expression of a fiend! —"Now," said Crauford, relapsing into his usual careless tone, somewhat enlivened by his sneer, "now, then, you must not interrupt me in my disclosure, by those starts and exclamations which break from your philosophy like sparks from flint. Hear me throughout."

And, bending down, till his mouth reched Glendower's ear, he commenced his recital. Artfully hiding his own agency, the master-spring of the gigantic machinery of fraud, which, too mighty for a single hand, required an assistant—throwing into obscurity the sin, while, knowing the undaunted courage and desperate fortunes of the man, he did not affect to conceal the danger—expatiating upon the advantages, the immense and almost inexhaustible resources of wealth which his scheme suddenly opened upon one in the deepest abyss of poverty, and slighly sketching, as if to excite vanity, the ingenuity and genius by which the scheme originated, and could only be sustained —Crauford's detail of temptation, in its knowledge of human nature, in its adaptation of act to principles, in its web-like craft of self-concealment, and the speciousness of its lure, was indeed a splendid masterpiece of villainous invention.

But while Glendower listened, and his silence flattered Crauford's belief of victory, not for one single moment did a weak or yielding desire creep around his heart. Subtly as the scheme was varnished, and scarce a tithe of its comprehensive enormity unfolded, the strong and acute mind of one long accustomed to unravel sophistry and gaze on the loveliness of

truth, saw at once that the scheme proposed was of the most unmingled treachery and baseness. Sick, chilled, withering at heart, Glendower leant against the damp wall; as every word which the tempter fondly imagined was irresistibly confirming his purpose, tore away the last prop to which, in the credulity of hope, the student had clung, and mocked while it crushed the fondness of his belief.

Crauford ceased, and stretched forth his hand to grasp Glendower's. He felt it not.—"You do not speak, my friend," said he; "do you deliberate, or have you not decided?" Still no answer came. Surprised, and half alarmed, he turned round, and perceived by a momentary flash of lightning, that Glendower had risen, and was moving away towards the mouth of the arch.

"Good Heavens! Glendower," cried Crauford, "where are you going?"

"Any where," cried Glendower, in a sudden paroxysm of indignant passion, "any where in this great globe of suffering, so that the agonies of my human flesh and heart are not polluted by the accents of crime! And such crime!—Why, I would rather go forth into the highways, and win bread by the sharp knife, and the death struggle, than sink my soul in such mire and filthiness of sin. Fraud—fraud—treachery! Merciful Father! what can be my state, when these are supposed to tempt me!"

Astonished and aghast, Crauford remained rooted to the spot.

"Oh!" continued Glendower—and his noble nature was wrung to the utmost; "Oh, MAN—MAN! that I should have devoted my best and freshest years to the dream of serving thee! In my boyish enthusiasm, in my brief day of pleasure and of power, in the intoxication of love, in the reverse of fortune, in the squalid and obscure chambers of degradation and poverty, that one hope animated, cheered, sustained me through all! In temptation did this hand belie, or in sickness did this brain forego, or in misery did this heart forget, thy great and advancing cause? In the wide world, is there one being whom I have injured, even in thought—one being who, in the fellowship of want, should not have drunk of my cup, or broken with me the last morsel of my bread!—and now—now, is it come to this!"

And, hiding his face with his hands, he gave way to a violence of feeling, before which the weaker nature of Crauford stood trembling and abashed. It lasted not long; he raised his head from its drooping posture, and, as he stood at the entrance of the arch, a prolonged flash from the inconstant skies shone full upon his form. Tall, erect, still, the gloomy and ruined walls gave his colorless countenance and haughty stature in bold and distinct relief; all trace of the past passion had vanished: perfectly calm and set, his features borrowed even dignity from their marble paleness, and the marks of suffering, which the last few months had writ in legible characters on the cheek and brow. Seeking out, with an eye to which the intolerable lightnings seemed to have lent something of their fire, the cowering and bended form of his companion, he said—

"Go home, miserable derider of the virtue you cannot understand—go to your luxurious and costly home—go and repine that human nature is not measured by your mangled and crippled laws;—amidst men, yet more fallen than I am, hope to select your victim—amidst prisons, and hovels, and roofless sheds—amidst rags and destitution, and wretches made mad by hunger, hope that you may find a villain.—I leave you to that hope, and—to remembrance!"

As Glendower moved away, Crauford recovered himself. Rendered desperate by the vital necessity of procuring some speedy aid in his designs, and not yet perfectly persuaded of the fallacy of his former judgment, he was resolved not to suffer Glendower thus easily to depart. Smothering his feelings by an effort, violent even to his habitual hypocrisy, he sprung forward, and laid his hand upon Glendower's shoulder.

"Stay, stay," said he, in a soothing and soft voice; "you have wronged me greatly. I pardon your warmth—nay, I honor it; but hereafter you will repent your judgment of me. At least, do justice to my intentions. Was I an actor in the scheme proposed to you?—what was it to me? Was I in the smallest degree to be benefited by it? Could I have any other motive than affection for you? If I erred, it was from a different view of the question; but is it not the duty of a friend to find expedients for distress, and to leave to the distressed person the right of accepting or rejecting them? But let this drop for ever—partake of my for-

tune—be my adopted brother. Here, I have hundreds about me at this moment; take them all, and own, at least, that I meant you well."

Feeling that Glendower, who at first had vainly endeavored to shake off his hand, now turned towards him, though at the moment it was too dark to see his countenance, the wily speaker continued — "Yes, Glendower, if by that name I must alone address you, take all I have—there is no one in this world dearer to me than you are. I am a lonely and disappointed man, without children or ties. I sought out a friend who might be my brother in life, and my heir in death. I found you—be that to me!"

"I am faint and weak," said Glendower, slowly, "and I believe my senses cannot be clear; but a minute since, and you spoke at length, and with a terrible distinctness, words which it polluted my very ear to catch, and *now* you speak as if you loved me. Will it please you to solve the riddle?"

"The truth is this," said Crauford: "I knew your pride—I feared you would not accept a permament pecuniary aid, even from friendship. I was driven, therefore, to devise some plan of independence for you. I could think of no plan but that which I proposed. You speak of it as wicked: it may be so; but it seemed not wicked to me. I may have formed a wrong—I own it is a peculiar—system of morals; but it is, at least, sincere. Judging of my proposal by that system, I saw no sin in it. I saw, too, much less danger than, in the honesty of my heart, I spoke of. In a similar distress, I solemnly swear, I myself would have adopted a similar relief. Nor is this all; the plan proposed would have placed thousands in your power. Forgive me if I thought your life, and the lives of those most dear to you, of greater value than these sums to the persons defrauded—ay—defrauded, if you will: forgive me if I thought that with these thousands you would effect far more good to the community than their legitimate owners. Upon these grounds, and on some others, too tedious now to state, I justified my proposal to my conscience. Pardon me, I again beseech you: accept my last proposal; be my partner, my friend, my heir; and forget a scheme never proposed to you, if I had hoped (what I hope now) that you would accept the alternative which it is my pride to offer, and which you are not justified, even by pride, to refuse."

"Great Source of all knowledge!" ejaculated Glendower, scarce audibly, and to himself. "Supreme and unfathomable God!—dost thou most loathe or pity thine abased creatures, walking in their dim reason upon this little earth, and sanctioning fraud, treachery, crime, upon a principle borrowed from thy laws! Oh! when—when will thy full light of wisdom travel down to us, and guilt and sorrow, and this world's evil mysteries, roll away like vapors before the blaze!"

"I do not hear you, my friend," said Crauford. "Speak aloud; you will—I feel you will, accept my offer, and become my brother!"

"Away!" said Glendower, "I will not."

"He wanders—his brain is touched!" muttered Crauford, and then resumed aloud—"Glendower, we are both unfit for talk at present—both unstrung by our late jar. You will meet me again to-morrow, perhaps. I will accompany you now to your door."

"Not a step: our paths are different."

"Well, well, if you will have it so, be it as you please. I have offended; you have a right to punish me, and play the churl to-night; but your address?"

"Yonder," said Glendower, pointing to the heavens. "Come to me a month hence, and you will find me *there!*"

"Nay, nay, my friend, your brain is heated, but you leave me! Well, as I said, your will is mine—at least take some of these paltry notes in earnest of our bargain; remember when next we meet you will share all I have."

"You remind me," said Glendower, quietly, "that we have old debts to settle. When last I saw you, you lent me a certain sum—there it is—take it—count it—there is but one poor guinea gone. Fear not—even to the uttermost farthing you shall be repaid."

"Why, why, this is unkind, ungenerous. Stay, stay,—" but, waving his hand impatiently, Glendower darted away, and passing into another street, the darkness effectually closed upon his steps.

"Fool, fool, that I am," cried Crauford stamping vehemently on the ground—"in what point did my wit fail me, that I could not win one whom very hunger had driven into my net? But I must yet find him—and I will—the police shall be set to work: these half confidences

may ruin me. And how deceitful he has proved—to talk more diffidently than a whining harlot upon virtue, and yet be so stubborn upon trial! Dastard that I am too, as well as fool—I felt sunk into the dust by his voice. But pooh, I must have him yet; your worst villains make the most noise about the first step. True, that I cannot storm, but I will undermine. But, wretch that I am, I must win him, or another soon, or I perish on a gibbet—Out, base thought!"

CHAPTER LVII.

Formam quidem ipsam, Marce fili, et tanquam faciem honesti vides: quæ, si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores (ut ait Plato) excitaret sapientia.*—TULL.

It was almost dawn when Glendower returned to his home. Fearful of disturbing his wife, he stole with mute steps to the damp and rugged chamber, where the last son of a princely line, and the legitimate owner of lands and halls which ducal rank might have envied, held his miserable asylum. The first faint streaks of coming light broke through the shutterless and shattered windows, and he saw that *she* reclined in a deep sleep upon the chair beside their child's couch. She would not go to bed herself till Glendower returned, and she had sat up, watching and praying, and listening for his footsteps, till, in the utter exhaustion of debility and sickness, sleep had fallen upon her. Glendower bent over her.

"Sleep," said he, "sleep on! The wicked do not come to thee now. Thou art in a world that has no fellowship with this—a world from which even happiness is not banished! Nor woe, nor pain, nor memory of the past, nor despair of all before thee, make the characters of thy present state! Thou forestallest the forgetfulness of the grave, and thy heart concentrates all earth's comfort in one word—'Oblivion.' Beautiful, *how* beautiful thou art even yet?—that smile, that momentary blush, years have not conquered *them*. They are as when, my young bride, thou didst lean first upon my bosom, and dream that sorrow was no more! And I have brought thee unto this. These green walls make thy bridal chamber—yon fragments of bread thy bridal board. Well! it is no matter! thou art on thy way to a land where all things, even a breaking heart, are at rest. I weep not; wherefore should I weep! Tears are not for the dead, but their survivors. I would rather see thee drop inch by inch into the grave, and smile as I beheld it, than save thee for an inheritance of sin. What is there in this little and sordid life that we should strive to hold it? What in this dreadful dream that we should fear to wake?"

And Glendower knelt beside his wife, and, despite his words, tears flowed fast and gushingly down his cheeks; and wearied as he was, he watched upon her slumbers, till they fell from the eyes to which his presence was more joyous than the day.

It was a beautiful thing, even in sorrow, to see that couple, whom want could not debase, nor misfortune, which makes even generosity selfish, divorce! All that Fate had stripped from the poetry and graces of life, had not shaken one leaf from the romance of their green and unwithered affections! They were the very type of love in its holiest and most enduring shape: their hearts had grown together—their being had flowed through caves and deserts, and reflected the storms of an angry Heaven; but its waters had indissolubly mingled into one! Young, gifted, noble, and devoted, they were worthy victims of this blighting and bitter world! Their garden was turned into a wilderness; but, like our first parents, it was hand in hand that they took their solitary way! Evil beset them, but they swerved not; the rains and the winds fell upon their unsheltered heads, but they were not bowed; and through the mazes and briars of this weary life, their bleeding footsteps strayed not, *for they had a clue!* The mind seemed, as it were, to become visible and *external* as the frame decayed, and to cover the body with something of its own invulnerable power; so that whatever should have attacked the mortal and frail part, fell upon that which, imperishable and divine, resisted and subdued it!

It was unfortunute for Glendower that he never again met Wolfe; for neither fanaticism of political faith, nor sternness of natural temper, subdued in the republican the real benevolence and generosity which redeemed and elevated his character: nor could any

* Son Marcus, you see the form and as it were the face of Virtue—that Wisdom, which if it could be perceived by the eyes, would (as Plato saith) kindle absolute and marvellous affection.

impulse of party-zeal have induced him, like Crauford, systematically to take advantage of poverty in order to tempt to participation in his schemes. From a more evil companion Glendower had not yet escaped: Crauford, by some means or other, found out his abode, and lost no time in availing himself of the discovery. In order fully to comprehend his unwearied persecution of Glendower, it must constantly be remembered, that to this persecution he was bound by a necessity which, urgent, dark, and implicating life itself, rendered him callous to every obstacle, and unsusceptible of all remorse. With the exquisite tact which he possessed, he never openly recurred to his former proposal of fraud: he contented himself with endeavoring to persuade Glendower to accept pecuniary assistance; but in vain. The veil once torn from his character, no craft could restore. Through all his pretences, and seven-fold hypocrisy, Glendower penetrated at once into his real motives: he was not to be duped by assurances of friendship which he knew the very dissimilarities between their natures rendered impossible. He had seen at the first, despite of all allegations to the contrary, that in the fraud Crauford had proposed, that person could by no means be an uninfluenced and cold adviser. In after conversations, Crauford, driven, by the awful interest he had in success, from his usual consummateness of duplicity, betrayed in various important minutiæ how deeply he was implicated in the crime for which he had argued; and not even the visible and progressive decay of his wife and child could force the stern mind of Glendower into accepting those wages of iniquity which he knew well were only offered as an earnest or a snare.

There is a royalty in extreme suffering, when the mind falls not with the fortunes, which no hardihood of vice can violate unabashed. Often and often, humbled and defeated, through all his dissimulation, was Crauford driven from the presence of the man whom it was his bitterest punishment to fear most when most he affected to despise; and *as* often, recollecting his powers, and fortifying himself in his experience of human frailty when sufficiently tried, did he return to his attempts. He waylaid the door and watched the paths of his intended prey. He knew that the mind which even best repels temptation first urged, hath seldom power to resist the same suggestion, if daily,—dropping,—unwearying,—presenting itself in every form,—obtruded in every hour,—losing its horror by custom,—and finding in the rebellious bosom itself its smoothest vizard and most alluring excuse. And it was, indeed, a mighty and perilous trial to Glendower, when rushing from the presence of his wife and child—when fainting under accumulated evils—when almost delirious with sickening and heated thought, to hear at each prompting of the wrung and excited nature, each heave of the black fountain that in no mortal breast is utterly exhausted, one smooth, soft, persuasive voice for ever whispering, "Relief!"—relief, certain, utter, instantaneous!—the voice of one pledged never to relax an effort or spare a pang, by a danger to himself, a danger of shame and death—the voice of one who never spoke but in friendship and compassion, profound in craft, and a very sage in the disguises with which language invests deeds.

But VIRTUE has resources buried in itself, which we know not, till the invading hour calls them from their retreats. Surrounded by hosts without, and when Nature itself, turned traitor, is its most deadly enemy within; it assumes a new and a superhuman power, which is greater than Nature itself. Whatever be its creed—whatever be its sect—from whatever segment of the globe its orisons arise, Virtue is God's empire, and from his throne of thrones He will defend it. Though cast into the distant earth, and struggling on the dim arena of a human heart, all things above are spectators of its conflict, or enlisted in its cause. The angels have their charge over it—the banners of arch-angels are on its side; and from sphere to sphere, through the illimitable ether, and round the impenetrable darkness at the feet of God, its triumph is hymned by harps, which are strung to the glories of the Creator!

One evening, when Crauford had joined Glendower in his solitary wanderings, the dissembler renewed his attacks.

"But why not," said he, "accept from my friendship what to my benevolence you would deny? I couple with my offers, my prayers rather, no conditions. How then *do* you, *can* you, reconcile it to your conscience, to suffer your wife and child to perish before your eyes?"

"Man—man," said Glendower, "tempt me no more—let them die! At present the worst is death—what you offer me is dishonor."

"Heavens!—how uncharitable is this! Can you call the mere act of accepting money from one who loves you, dishonor?"

"It is in vain that you varnish your designs," said Glendower, stopping, and fixing his eyes upon him. "Do you not think that cunning ever betrays itself? In a thousand words—in a thousand looks, which have escaped *you*, but not *me*, I know that, if there be one being on this earth whom you hate, and would injure, that being is myself. Nay, start not—listen to me patiently. I have sworn that it is the last opportunity you shall have. I will not subject myself to farther temptation: I am now sane; but there are things which may drive me mad, and in madness you might conquer. You hate me: it is out of the nature of earthly things that you should not. But even were it otherwise, do you think that I could believe you would come from your voluptuous home to these miserable retreats; that, among the lairs of beggary and theft, you would lie in wait to allure me to forsake poverty, without a stronger motive than love for one who affects it not for you? I know you—I have read your heart—I have penetrated into that stronger motive—it is your own safety. In the system of atrocity you proposed to me, you are the principal. You have already bared to me enough of the extent to which that system reaches, to convince me that a single miscreant, however ingenious, cannot, unassisted, support it with impunity. You want help: I am he in whom you have dared to believe that you could find it. You are detected—now be undeceived!"

"Is it so?" said Crauford; and as he saw that it was no longer possible to feign, the poison of his heart broke forth in its full venom. The fiend rose from the reptile, and stood exposed in its natural shape. Returning Glendower's stern but lofty gaze with an eye to which all evil passions lent their unholy fire, he repeated, "Is it so?—then you are more penetrating than I thought; but it is indifferent to me. It was for your sake, not mine, most righteous man, that I wished you might have a disguise to satisfy the modesty of your punctilios. It is all one to Richard Crauford whether you go blindfold or with open eyes into his snare. Go you must, and *shall*. Ay, frowns will not awe me. You have desired the truth; you shall have it. You are right, I hate you—hate you with a soul whose force of hatred you cannot dream of. Your pride, your stubbornness, your coldness of heart, which things that would stir the blood of beggars, cannot warm—your icy and passionless virtue—I hate—I hate all! Your are right also, most wise inquisitor, in supposing that in the scheme proposed to you, I am the principal—I am! You were to be the tool and *shall*. I have offered you mild inducements—pleas to soothe the technicalities of your conscience—you have rejected them—be it so. Now choose between my first offer and the gibbet. Ay, the gibbet! That night on which we made the appointment, which shall not yet be in vain—on that night you stopped me in the street—you demanded money—you robbed me—I will swear—I will prove it. Now, then, tremble, man of morality—dupe of your own strength—you are in my power—tremble! Yet in *my* safety is your escape—I am generous. I repeat my original offer—wealth, as great as you will demand, or—the gibbet—the gibbet—do I speak loud enough?—do you hear?"

"Poor fool!" said Glendower, laughing scornfully, and moving away. But when Crauford, partly in mockery, partly in menace, placed his hand upon Glendower's shoulder, as if to stop him, the touch seemed to change his mood from scorn to fury—turning abruptly round, he seized the villain's throat with a giant's strength, and cried out, while his whole countenance worked beneath the tempestuous wrath within, "What if I squeeze out thy poisonous life from thee this moment!"—and then once more bursting into a withering laughter, as he surveyed the terror which he had excited, he added, "No, no; thou art too vile!"—and, dashing the hypocrite against the wall of a neighboring house, he strode away.

Recovering himself slowly, and trembling with rage and fear, Crauford gazed round, expecting yet to find he had sported too far with the passions he had sought to control. When, however, he had fully satisfied himself that Glendower was gone, all his wrathful and angry feelings returned with redoubled force. But their most biting torture was the consciousness of their impotence. For after the first par-

oxysm of rage had subsided, he saw, too clearly, that his threat could not be executed without incurring the most imminent danger of discovery. High as his character stood, it was possible that no charge against him might excite suspicion; but a word might cause inquiry—and inquiry would be ruin. Forced, therefore, to stomach his failure, his indignation, his shame, his hatred, and his vengeance, his own heart became a punishment almost adequate to his vices.

"But my foe will die," said he, clenching his fist so firmly that the nails almost brought blood from the palm; "he will starve, famish; and see them—his wife, his child—perish first! I shall have my triumph, though I shall not witness it!—But now, away to my villa: there, at least, will be some one whom I can mock, and beat, and trample, if I will! *Would—would—would that I were that very man, destitute as he is!* His neck, at least, is safe: if he dies, it will not be upon the gallows, nor among the hootings of the mob! O, horror! horror! What are my villa, my wine, my women, with that black thought, ever following me like a shadow?—Who—who, while an avalanche is sailing over him, who would sit down to feast?"

Leaving this man to shun or be overtaken by Fate, we return to Glendower. It is needless to say that Crauford visited him no more; and, indeed, shortly afterwards Glendower again changed his home. But every day and every hour brought new strength to the disease which was creeping and burning through the veins of the devoted wife; and Glendower, who saw, on earth, nothing before them but a goal, from which, as yet, they had been miraculously delivered, repined not as he beheld her approach to a gentler and benigner home. Often he sate, as she was bending over their child, and gazed upon her cheek with an insane and fearful joy at the characters which consumption had there engraved; but when she turned towards him her fond eyes (those deep wells of love, in which truth lay hid, and which neither languor nor disease could exhaust), the unnatural hardness of his heart melted away, and he would rush from the house, to give vent to an agony against which fortitude and manhood were in vain!

There was no hope for their distress. His wife had, unknown to Glendower (for she dreaded his pride), written several times to a relation, who, though distant, was still the nearest in blood which fate had spared her, but ineffectually; the scions of a large and illegitimate family, which surrounded him, utterly prevented the success, and generally interrupted the application, of any claimant on his riches but themselves. Glendower, whose temper had ever kept him aloof from all but the commonest aquaintances, knew no human being to apply to. Utterly unable to avail himself of the mine which his knowledge and talents should have proved—sick, and despondent at heart, and debarred by the loftiness of honor, or rather principle that nothing could quell, from any unlawful means of earning bread, which to most minds would have been rendered excusable by the urgency of nature, Glendower marked the days drag on in dull and protracted despair, and envied every corpse that he saw borne to the asylum in which all earth's hopes seemed centred and confined.

CHAPTER LVIII.

For ours was not like earthly love.
And must this parting be our very last?
No! I shall love thee still when death itself is past.
* * * * *
* * * * *
Hush'd were his Gertrude's lips! but still their bland
And beautiful expression seem'd to melt
With love that could not die! and still his hand
She presses to the heart, no more that felt.
Ah, heart! where once each fond affection dwelt.
—CAMPBELL.

"I WONDER," said Mr. Brown to himself, as he spurred his shaggy pony to a speed very unusual to the steady habits of either party—"I wonder where I shall find him. I would not for the late Lady Waddilove's best diamond cross have anybody forestall me in the news. To think of my young master dying so soon after my last visit, or rather my last visit but one—and to think of the old gentleman taking on so, and raving about his injustice to the rightful possessor, and saying that he is justly punished, and asking me so eagerly if I could discover the retreat of the late squire, and believing me so implicitly when I undertook to do it, and giving me this letter!" And here Mr. Brown wistfully examined an epistle sealed with black wax, peeping into the corners,

which irritated rather than satisfied his curiosity—"I wonder what the old gentleman says in it—I suppose he will, of course, give up the estate and house. Let me see—that long picture gallery, just built, will, at all events, want furnishing. That would be a famous opportunity to get rid of the Indian jars, and the sofas, and the great Turkey carpet. How lucky that I should just have come in time to get the letter. But let me consider how I shall find out?—an advertisement in the paper? Ah! that's the plan. 'Algernon Mordaunt, Esq.: something greatly to his advantage—apply to Mr. Brown, etc.' Ah! that will do well, very well. The Turkey carpet won't be quite long enough. I wish I had discovered Mr. Mordaunt's address before, and lent him some money during the young gentleman's life; it would have seemed more generous. However, I can offer it now, before I show the letter. Bless me, it's getting dark. Come, Dobbin, ye-up!" Such were the meditations of the faithful friend of the late Lady Waddilove, as he hastened to London, charged with the task of discovering Mordaunt, and with the delivery of the following epistle:

'You are now, sir, the heir to that property, which, some years ago, passed from your hands into mine. My son, for whom alone wealth, or, I may say life, was valuable to me, is no more. I only, an old, childless man, stand between you and the estates of Mordaunt. Do not wait for my death to enjoy them. I cannot live here, where everything reminds me of my great and irreparable loss. I shall remove next month into another home. Consider this, then, as once more yours. The house, I believe, you will find not disimproved by my alterations; the mortgages on the estate have been paid off; the former rental you will perhaps allow my steward to account to *you* for, and after my death the present one will be yours. I am informed that you are a proud man, and not likely to receive favors. Be it so, sir!—it is no favor you will receive, but justice—there are circumstances connected with my treaty with your father, which have of late vexed my conscience—and conscience, sir, must be satisfied at any loss. But we shall meet, perhaps, and talk over the past; at present I will not enlarge on it. If you have suffered by me, I am sufficiently punished, and my only hope is to repair your losses.

"I am, etc.

"H. VAVASOUR MORDAUNT."

Such was the letter, so important to Mordaunt, with which our worthy friend was charged. Bowed to the dust as Vavasour was by the loss of his son, and open to conscience as affliction had made him, he had lived too long for effect, not to be susceptible to its influence, even to the last. Amidst all his grief, and it was intense, there were some whispers of self-exaltation, at the thought of the *eclat* which his generosity and abdication would excite; and, with true worldly morality, the hoped-for plaudits of others gave a triumph, rather than humiliation, to his reconcilement with himself.

To say truth, there were indeed circumstances connected with his treaty with Mordaunt's father, calculated to vex his conscience. He knew that he had not only taken great advantage of Mr. Mordaunt's distress, but that, at his instigation, a paper which could for ever have prevented Mr. Mordaunt's sale of the property, had been destroyed. These circumstances, during the life of his son, he had endeavored to forget or to palliate. But grief is rarely deaf to remorse; and at the death of that idolized son, the voice at his heart grew imperious, and he lost the power in losing the motive, of reasoning it away.

Mr. Brown's advertisement was unanswered; and, with the zeal and patience of the Christian proselyte's tribe and calling, the good man commenced, in person, a most elaborate and painstaking research. For a long time, his endeavors were so ineffectual, that Mr. Brown, in despair, disposed of the two Indian jars for half their value, and heaved a despondent sigh, whenever he saw the great Turkey carpet rolled up in his warehouse with as much obstinacy as if it never meant to unroll itself again.

At last, however, by dint of indefatigable and minute investigation, he ascertained that the object of his search had resided in London, under a feigned name; from lodging to lodging, and corner to corner, he tracked him, till at length he made himself master of Mordaunt's present retreat. A joyful look did Mr. Brown cast at the great Turkey carpet, as he passed by it, on his way to his street door, on the morning of his intended visit to Mordaunt. "It is a fine thing to have a good heart," said he, in the true style of Sir Christopher Findlater, and he again eyed the Turkey carpet. "I really feel quite happy at the thought of the pleasure I shall give!"

After a walk through as many obscure and filthy *wynds*, and lanes, and alleys, and courts, as ever were treaded by some humble fugitive from justice, the patient Morris came to a sort

of court, situated among the miserable hovels in the vicinity of the Tower. He paused, wonderingly, at a dwelling, in which every window was broken, and where the tiles, torn from the roof, lay scattered in forlorn confusion beside the door: where the dingy bricks looked crumbling away, from very age and rottenness, and the fabric, which was of great antiquity, seemed so rocking and infirm, that the eye looked upon its distorted and over-hanging position with a sensation of pain and dread; where the very rats had deserted their loathsome cells, from the insecurity of their tenure, and the ragged mothers of the abject neighborhood forbade their brawling children to wander under the threatening walls, lest they should keep the promise of their mouldering aspect, and, falling, bare to the obstructed and sickly day the secrets of their prison-house. Girt with the foul and reeking lairs of that extreme destitution which necessity urges irresistibly into guilt, and excluded, by filthy alleys, and an eternal atmosphere of smoke and rank vapor, from the blessed sun and pure air of Heaven, the miserable mansion seemed set apart for every disease to couch within—too perilous even for the hunted criminal—too dreary even for the beggar to prefer it to the bare hedge, or the inhospitable porch, beneath whose mockery of shelter the frosts of winter had so often numbed him into sleep.

Thrice did the heavy and silver-headed cane of Mr. Brown, resound upon the door, over which was a curious carving of a lion dormant, and a date, of which only the two numbers 15 were discernible. Roused by a note so unusual, and an apparition so unwontedly smug as the worthy Morris, a whole legion of dingy and smoke-dried brats, came trooping from the surrounding huts, and with many an elvish cry, and strange oath, and cabalistic word, which thrilled the respectable marrow of Mr. Brown, they collected in a gaping, and, to his alarmed eye, a menacing group, as near to the house as their fears and parents would permit them.

"It is very dangerous," thought Mr. Brown, looking shiveringly up at the hanging and tottering roof, "and very appalling," as he turned to the ragged crowd of infant reprobates which began with every moment to increase. At last he summoned courage, and inquired, in a tone half soothing and half dignified, if they could inform him how to obtain admittance, or how to arouse the inhabitants.

An old crone, leaning out of an opposite window, with matted hair hanging over a begrimed and shrivelled countenance, made answer. "No one," she said, in her peculiar dialect, which the worthy man scarcely comprehended, "lived there, or had done so for years;" but Brown knew better: and while he was asserting the fact, a girl put her head out of another hovel, and said that she had sometimes seen, at the dusk of the evening, a man leave the house, but whether any one else lived in it, she could not tell. Again Mr. Brown sounded an alarm, but no answer came forth, and in great fear and trembling, he applied violent hands to the door; it required but little force; it gave way; he entered; and, jealous of the entrance of the mob without, reclosed and barred, as well as he was able, the shattered door. The house was *unnaturally* large for the neighborhood, and Brown was in doubt whether first to ascend a broken and perilous staircase, or search the rooms below: he decided on the latter; he found no one, and with a misgiving heart, which nothing but the recollection of the great Turkey carpet could have inspired, he ascended the quaking steps. All was silent. But a door was unclosed. He entered, and saw the object of his search before him.

Over a pallet bent a form, on which, though youth seemed withered, and even pride broken, the unconquerable soul left somewhat of grace and of glory, that sustained the beholder's remembrance of better days—a child in its first infancy knelt on the nearer side of the bed, with clasped hands, and vacant eyes that turned towards the intruder, with a listless and lack-lustre gaze. But Glendower, or rather Mordaunt, as he bent over the pallet, spoke not, moved not; his eyes were riveted on one object; his heart seemed turned into stone, and his veins curdled into ice. Awed and chilled by the breathing desolation of the spot, Brown approached, and spoke, he scarcely knew what. "You are," he concluded his address, "the master of Mordaunt Court;" and he placed the letter in the hands of the person he thus greeted.

"Awake, hear me!" cried Algernon to Isabel, as she lay extended on the couch; and the messenger of glad tidings, for the first time seeing her countenance, shuddered, and knew that he was in the chamber of death.

"Awake, my own, own love! Happy days are in store for us yet: our misery is past; you will live, live to bless me in riches, as you have done in want."

Isabel raised her eyes to his, and a smile, sweet, comforting, and full of love, passed the lips, which were about to close for ever, "Thank Heaven," she murmured, "for your dear sake. It is pleasant to die now, and *thus!*" and she placed the hand that was clasped in her relaxing and wan fingers, within the bosom which had been, for anguished and hopeless years, his asylum and refuge, and which now, when fortune changed, as if it had only breathed in comfort to his afflictions, was, for the first time, and for ever, to be cold,—cold even to him!

"You will live—you will live," cried Mordaunt, in wild and incredulous despair—"in mercy live! You who have been my angel of hope, do not—O God, O God! do not desert me now!"

But that faithful and loving heart was already deaf to his voice, and the film grew darkening and rapidly over the eye, which still, with undying fondness, sought him out through the shade and agony of death. Sense and consciousness were gone, and dim and confused images whirled round her soul, struggling a little moment before they sunk into the depth and silence where the past lies buried. But still mindful of *him*, and grasping, as it were, at his remembrance, she clasped, closer and closer, the icy hand which she held, to her breast. "Your hand is cold, dearest—it is cold," said she faintly, "but I will warm it *here!*"—And so her spirit passed away, and Mordaunt felt afterwards, in a lone and surviving pilgrimage, that her last thought had been kindness to him, and her last act had spoken forgetfulness even of death, in the tenderness of love!

CHAPTER LIX.

Change and time take together their flight.
—*Golden Violet.*

One evening in autumn, about three years after the date of our last chapter, a stranger on horseback, in deep mourning, dismounted at the door of "the Golden Fleece," in the memorable town of W——. He walked into the tap-room, and asked for a private apartment and accommodation for the night. The landlady, grown considerably plumper than when we first made her acquaintance, just lifted up her eyes to the stranger's face, and summoning a short stout man (formerly the waiter, now the second helpmate of the comely hostess), desired him, in a tone which partook somewhat more of the authority indicative of their former relative situations than of the obedience which should have characterized their present, to "show the gentleman to the Griffin, No. Four."

The stranger smiled as the sound greeted his ears, and he followed not so much the host as the hostess's spouse into the apartment thus designated. A young lady, who some eight years ago little thought that she should still be in a state of single blessedness, and who always honored with an attentive eye the stray travellers who, from their youth, loneliness, or that ineffable air which usually designates the unmarried man, might be in the same solitary state of life, turned to the landlady, and said—

"Mother, did you observe what a handsome gentleman that was?"

"No," replied the landlady; "I only observed that he brought no servant."

"I wonder," said the daughter, "if he is in the army?—he has a military air!"

"I suppose he has dined," muttered the landlady to herself, looking towards the larder.

"Have you seen Squire Mordaunt within a short period of time?" asked, somewhat abruptly, a little thick-set man, who was enjoying his pipe and negus in a sociable way at the window-seat. The characteristics of this personage were, a spruce wig, a bottle nose, an elevated eyebrow, a snuff-colored skin and coat, and an air of that consequential self-respect which distinguishes the philosopher who agrees with the French sage, and sees "no reason in the world why a man should not esteem himself."

"No, indeed, Mr. Bossolton," returned the landlady; "but I suppose that, as he is now in the parliament-house, he will live less retired. It is a pity that the inside of that noble old hall of his should not be more seen—and after all the old gentleman's improvements, too! They say that the estate now, since the mortgages were paid off, is above ten thousand pounds a-year, clear!"

"And, if I am not induced into an error," rejoined Mr. Bossolton, refilling his pipe, "old Vavasour left a great sum of ready-money besides, which must have been in aid, and an assistance, and an advantage, mark me, Mistress Merrylack, to the owner of Mordaunt-Hall, that has escaped the calculation of your faculty, —and the—and the—faculty of your calculation!"

"You mistake, Mr. Boss," as, in the friendliless of diminutives, Mrs. Merrylack sometimes styled the grandiloquent practitioner—"you mistake: the old gentleman left all his ready money in two bequests—the one to the College of ——, in the university of Cambridge, and the other to an hospital in London. I remember the very words of the will—they ran thus, Mr. Boss:—'And whereas my beloved son, had he lived, would have been a member of the College of ——, in the university of Cambridge, which he would have adorned by his genius, learning, youthful virtue, and the various qualities which did equal honor to his head and heart, and would have rendered him alike distinguished as the scholar and the Christian—I do devise and bequeath the sum of thirty-seven thousand pounds sterling, now in the English funds,' etc., etc.; and then follows the manner in which he will have his charity vested and bestowed, and all about the prize which shall be for ever designated and termed 'The Vavasour Prize,' and what shall be the words of the Latin speech which shall be spoken when the said prize be delivered, and a great deal more to that effect: so, then, he passes to the other legacy, of exactly the same sum, to the hospital, usually called and styled ———, in the city of London, and says, 'And whereas we are assured by the Holy Scriptures, which, in these days of blasphemy and sedition, it becomes every true Briton and member of the Established Church to support, that "charity doth cover a multitude of sins"—so I do give and devise,' etc., etc., 'to be for ever termed in the deeds,' etc., etc., 'of the said hospital, "The Vavasour Charity;" and always provided that, on the anniversary of the day of my death, a sermon shall be preached in the chapel attached to the said hospital, by a clergyman of the Established Church, on any text appropriate to the day and deed so commemorated.'—But the conclusion is most beautiful, Mr. Bossolton:—'And now, having discharged my duties, to the best of my humble ability, to my God, my king, and my country, and dying in the full belief of the Protestant Church, as by law established, I do set my hand and seal,' etc., etc."

"A very pleasing, and charitable, and devout, and virtuous, testament or will, Mistress Merrylack," said Mr. Bossolton; "and in a time when anarchy with gigantic strides does devastate, and devour, and harm, the good old customs of our ancestors and forefathers, and tramples with its poisonous breath the Magna Charta, and the glorious Revolution, it is beautiful—ay, and sweet—mark you, Mrs. Merrylack, to behold a gentleman of the aristocratic classes, or grades, supporting the institutions of his country with such remarkable energy of sentiments, and with—and with—Mistress Merrylack—with sentiments of such remarkable energy."

"Pray," said the daughter, adjusting her ringlets by a little glass which hung over the tap, "how long has Mr. Mordaunt's lady been dead?"

"Oh! she died just before the squire came to the property," quoth the mother. "Poor thing—she was so pretty. I am sure I cried for a whole hour when I heard it! I think it was three years last month, when it happened. Old Mr. Vavasour died about two months afterwards."

"The afflicted husband" (said Mr. Bossolton, who was the victim of a most fiery Mrs. Boss at home,) "went into foreign lands or parts, or, as it is vulgarly termed, the continent, immediately after an event, or occurrence, so fatal to the cup of his prosperity, and the sunshine of his enjoyment, did he not, Mrs. Merrylack?"

"He did. And you know, Mr. Boss, he only returned about six months ago."

"And of what borough, or burgh, or town, or city, is he the member and representative?" asked Mr. Jeremiah Bossolton, putting another lump of sugar into his negus. "I have heard, it is true, but my memory is short; and, in the multitude and multifariousness of my professional engagements, I am often led into a forgetfulness of matters less important in their variety, and less—less various in their importance."

"Why," answered Mrs. Merrylack, "somehow or other, I quite forget too; but it is some

distant borough. The gentleman wanted him to stand for the county, but he would not hear of it; perhaps he did not like the publicity of the thing, for he is mighty reserved."

"Proud, haughty, arrogant, and assumptious!" said Mr. Bossolton, with a puff of unusual length.

"Nay, nay," said the daughter (young people are always the first to defend), "I am sure he's not proud—he does a mort of good, and has the sweetest smile possible! I wonder if he'll marry again! He is very young yet, not above two or three-and-thirty." (The kind damsel would not have thought two or three-and-thirty *very* young some years ago; but we grow wonderfully indulgent to the age of other people as we grow older ourselves!)

"And what an eye he has!" said the landlady. "Well, for my part—but, bless me. Here, John—John—John—waiter—husband, I mean—here's a carriage and four at the door. Lizzy, dear, is my cap right?"

And mother, daughter, and husband, all flocked, charged with simper, courtesy, and bow, to receive their expected guests. With a disappointment which we who keep not inns can but very imperfectly conceive the trio beheld a single personage—a valet—descend from the box, open the carriage door, and take out—a desk!—Of all things human, male or female, the said carriage was utterly empty.

The valet bustled up to the landlady: "My master's here, ma'am, I think—rode on before!"

"And who is your master?" asked Mrs. Merrylack—a thrill of alarm, and the thought of No. Four, coming across her at the same time.

"Who?" said the valet, rubbing his hands; "who!—why Clarence Talbot Linden, Esq., of Scarsdale Park, County of York, late Secretary of Legation, at the court of ——, now M.P., and one of his Majesty's under Secretaries of State."

"Mercy upon us!" cried the astounded landlady, "and No. Four! only think of it. Run, John,—John—run—light a fire (the night's cold, I think)—in the Elephant, Number Sixteen—beg the gentleman's pardon—say it was occupied till now; ask what he'll have for dinner—fish, flesh, foul, steaks, joints, chops, tarts—or, if it's too late (but it's quite early yet—you may put back the day an hour or so), ask what he'll have for supper, run, John, run:—what's the oaf staying for—run, I tell you!—Pray, sir, walk in (to the valet, our old friend Mr. Harrison)—you'll be hungry after your journey, I think; no cermony, I beg."

"He's not so handsome as his master," said Miss Elizabeth, glancing at Harrison, discontentedly—"but he does not look like a married man, somehow. I'll just step up stairs and change my cap; it would be but civil if the gentleman's gentleman sups with us."

Meanwhile Clarence, having been left alone in the quiet enjoyment of No. Four, had examined the little apartment with an interest not altogether unmingled with painful reflections. There are few persons, however fortunate, who can look back to eight years of their life, and not feel somewhat of disappointment in the retrospect: few persons, whose fortunes the world envy, to whom the token of past time, suddenly obtruded on their remembrance, does not awaken hopes destroyed, and wishes deceived, which that world has never known. We tell our triumphs to the crowd, but our own hearts are the sole confidants of our sorrows. "Twice," said Clarence to himself, "twice before have I been in this humble room; the first was when, at the age of eighteen, I was just launched into the world—a vessel which had for its only hope the motto of the chivalrous Sydney,—

Aut viam inveniam, aut faciam;*

yet, humble and nameless as I was, how well I can recall the exaggerated ambition, nay, the *certainty* of success, as well as its *desire*, which then burnt within me. I smile now at the overweening vanity of those hopes—some, indeed, realized, but how many nipped and withered for ever! seeds, of which a few fell upon rich ground, and prospered, but of which how far the greater number were scattered, some upon the wayside, and were devoured by immediate cares, some on stony places, and when the sun of manhood was up, they were scorched, and because they had no root, withered away: and some among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.—I am now rich, honored, high in the favor of courts, and not altogether unknown or unesteemed *arbitrio popularis auræ:* and yet I almost think I was happier

* I will either find my way, or—make it.

when, in that flush of youth and inexperience, I looked forth into the wide world, and imagined that from every corner would spring up a triumph for my vanity, or an object for my affections. The next time I stood in this little spot, I was no longer the dependent of a precarious charity, or the idle adventurer who had no stepping-stone but his ambition. I was then just declared the heir of wealth, which I could not rationally have hoped for five years before, and which was in itself sufficient to satisfy the asprings of ordinary men. But I was corroded with anxieties for the object of my love, and regret for the friend whom I had lost: perhaps the eagerness of my heart for the one rendered me, for the moment, too little mindful of the other; but, in after years, memory took ample atonement for that temporary suspension of her duties. How often have I recalled, in this world of cold ties and false hearts, that true and generous friend, from whose lessons my mind took improvement, and from whose warnings, example; who was to me, living, a father, and from whose generosity, whatever worldly advantages I have enjoyed, or distinctions I have gained, are derived! *Then* I was going with a torn, yet credulous, heart, to pour forth my secret and my passion to *her*, and, within one little week thence, how ship-wrecked of all hope, object, and future happiness, I was! Perhaps, at that time, I did not sufficiently consider the excusable cautions of the world—I should not have taken such umbrage at her father's letter—I should have revealed to him my birth, and accession of fortune—nor bartered the truth of certain happiness for the trials and manœuvres of romance. But it is too late to repent now. By this time my image must be wholly obliterated from her heart:—she has seen me in the crowd, and passed me coldly by—her cheek is pale, but not for me; and in a little—little while—she will be another's, and lost to me for ever! Yet have I never forgotten her through change or time—the hard and harsh projects of ambition—the labors of business, or the engrossing schemes of political intrigue. — Never!—but this is a vain and foolish subject of reflection now."

And not the *less* reflecting upon it for that sage and veracious recollection, Clarence turned from the window, against which he had been leaning, and drawing one of the four chairs to the solitary table, he sat down, moody and disconsolate, and leaning his face upon his hands, pursued the confused, yet not disconnected, thread of his meditations.

The door abruptly opened, and Mr. Merrylack appeared.

"Dear me, sir!" cried he, "a thousand pities you should have been put here, sir! Pray step up stairs, sir; the front drawing-room is just vacant, sir; what will you please to have for dinner, sir," etc. etc., according to the instructions of his wife. To Mr. Merrylack's great dismay, Clarence, however, resolutely refused all attempts at locomotion, and contenting himself with entrusting the dinner to the discretion of the landlady, desired to be left alone till it was prepared.

Now, when Mr. John Merrylack returned to the tap-room, and communicated the stubborn adherence to No. Four, manifested by its occupier, our good hostess felt exceedingly discomposed. "You are *so* stupid, John," said she, "I'll go and expostulate like with him;" and she was rising for that purpose, when Harrison, who was taking particularly good care of himself, drew her back: "I know my master's temper better than you do, ma'am," said he; "and when he is in the humor to be stubborn, the very devil himself could not get him out of it. I dare say he wants to be left to himself: he is very fond of being alone now and then; state affairs, you know (added the valet, mysteriously touching his forehead), and even I dare not disturb him for the world; so make yourself easy and I'll go to him when *he* has dined, and *I* supped. There is time enough for No. Four, when we have taken care of number *one*.—Miss, your health!"

The landlady, reluctantly overruled in her design, reseated herself.

"Mr. Clarence Linden, M. P., did you say, sir?" said the learned Jeremiah: "surely, I have had that name or appellation in my books, but I cannot, at this instant of time, recall to my recollection the exact date and circumstance of my professional services to the gentleman so designated, styled, or, I may say, termed."

"Can't say, I am sure, sir," said Harrison—"lived with my master many years—never had the pleasure of seeing you before, nor of travelling this road—a very hilly road it is, sir.

Miss, this negus is as bright as your eyes, and as warm as my admiration."

"Oh, sir!"

"Pray," said Mr. Merrylack, who, like most of his tribe, was a bit of a politician; "is it the Mr. Linden who made that long speech in the House the other day?"

"Precisely, sir. He is a very eloquent gentleman, indeed: pity he speaks so little—never made but that one long speech since he has been in the House, and a capital one it was, too. You saw how the prime minister complimented him upon it. 'A speech,' said his lordship, 'which had united the graces of youthful genius, with the sound calculations of matured experience!'"

"Did the prime minister really so speak?" said Jeremiah: "what a beautiful, and noble, and sensible compliment! I will examine my books when I go home—'the graces of youthful genius, with the sound calculations of matured experience!'"

"If he is in the Parliament House," quoth the landlady, "I suppose he will know our Mr. Mordaunt, when the squire takes his seat, next—what do you call it—sessions?"

"Know Mr. Mordaunt!" said the valet. "It is to see him that *we* have come down here. We intended to have gone there to-night, but master thought it too late, and I saw he was in a melancholy humor; we therefore resolved to come here; and so master took one of the horses from the groom, whom we have left behind with the other, and came on alone. I take it, he must have been in this town before, for he described the inn so well.—Capital cheese this; as mild—as mild as your sweet smile, miss!"

"Oh, sir!"

"Pray, *Mistress* Merrylack," said Mr. Jeremiah Bossolton, depositing his pipe on the table, and awakening from a profound reverie in which, for the last five minutes, his senses had been buried—"pray, Mistress Merrylack, do you not call to your mind, or your reminiscence, or your—your recollection, a young gentleman, equally comely in his aspect and blandiloquent (ehem!) in his address, who had the misfortune to have his arm severely contused and afflicted by a violent kick from Mr. Mordaunt's horse, even in the yard in which your stables are situated, and who remained for two or three days in your house, or tavern, or hotel? I do remember that you were grievously perplexed because of his name, the initials of which only he gave, or intrusted, or communicated to you, until you did exam—"

"I remember," interrupted Miss Elizabeth—"I remember well—a very beautiful young gentleman, who had a letter directed to be left here, addressed to him by the letters C. L., and who was afterwards kicked, and who admired your cap, mother, and whose name *was* Clarence Linden. You remember it well enough, mother, surely?

"I *think* I do, Lizzy," said the landlady, slowly; for her memory, not so much occupied as her daughter's by beautiful young gentlemen, struggled slowly amidst dim ideas of the various travellers and visitors with whom her house had been honored, before she came, at last, to the reminiscence of Clarence Linden—"I *think* I do—and Squire Mordaunt was very attentive to him—and he broke one of the panes of glass in No. Eight, and gave me half a guinea to pay for it. I *do* remember, perfectly, Lizzy. So that is the Mr. Linden now here!—only think!"

"I should not have known him, certainly," said Miss Elizabeth; "he is grown so much taller, and his hair looks quite dark now, and his face is much thinner than it was; but he's very handsome still—is he not, sir?" turning to the valet.

"Ah! ah! well enough," said Mr. Harrison, stretching out his right leg, and falling away a little to the left, in the manner adopted by the renowned Gil Blas, in his address to the fair Laura—"well enough; but he's a little too tall and thin, *I* think."

Mr. Harrison's faults in shape were certainly not those of being too tall and thin.

"Perhaps so!" said Miss Elizabeth, who scented the vanity by a kindred instinct, and had her own reasons for pampering it—"perhaps so!"

"But he is a great favorite with the ladies all the same; however, he only loves one lady. Ah, but I must not say who, though I know. However, she is so handsome; such eyes, they would go through you like a skewer, but not like yours, yours, miss, which, I vow and protest, are as bright as a service of plate."

"Oh, sir!"

And amidst these graceful compliments the time slipped away, till Clarence's dinner, and

his valet's supper being fairly over, Mr. Harrison presented himself to his master, a perfectly different being in attendance to what he was in companionship—flippancy, impertinence, forwardness, all merged in the steady, sober, serious demeanor which characterize the respectful aud well-bred domestic.

Clarence's orders were soon given. They were limited to the appurtenances of writing; and as soon as Harrison re-appeared with his master's writing-desk, he was dismissed for the night.

Very slowly did Clarence settle himself to his task, and attempt to escape the *ennui* of his solitude, or the restlessness of thought feeding upon itself, by indicting the following epistle:—

"TO THE DUKE OF HAVERFIELD.

"I WAS very unfortunate, my dear duke, to miss seeing you, when I called in Arlington-street, the evening before last, for I had a great deal to say to say to you —something upon public and a little upon private affairs. I will reserve the latter, since I only am the person concerned, for a future opportunity. With respect to the former, * * * *

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"And now, having finished the political part of my letter, let me congratulate you most sincerely upon your approaching marriage with Miss Trevanion. I do not know her myself; but I remember that she was the bosom friend of Lady Flora Ardenne, whom I have often heard speak of her in the highest and most affectionate terms, so that I imagine her brother could not better atone to you for dishonestly carrying off the fair Julia some three years ago, than by giving you his sister in honorable and orthodox exchange—the gold armor for the brazen.

"As for my lot, though I ought not, at this moment, to dim yours by dwelling upon it, you know how long, how constantly, how ardently I have loved Lady Flora Ardenne—how, for her sake, I have refused opportunities of alliance which might have gratified, to the utmost, that worldliness of heart which so many who saw me only in the crowd have been pleased to impute to me. You know that neither pleasure, nor change, nor the insult I received from her parents, nor the sudden indifference which I so little deserved from herself, has been able to obliterate her image. You will therefore sympathize with me, when I inform you that there is no longer any doubt of her marriage with Borodaile (or rather Lord Ulswater, since his father's death), as soon as the sixth month of his mourning expires; to this period only two months remain.

"Heavens! when one thinks over the past, how incredulous one could become to the future: when I recall all the tokens of love I received from that woman, I cannot persuade myself that they are now all forgotten, or rather, all lavished upon another.

"But I do not blame her—may she be happier with him than she could have been with me! and that hope shall whisper peace to regrets which I have been foolish to indulge so long, and it is perhaps well for me that they are about to be rendered for ever unavailing.

"I am staying at an inn, without books, companions, or any thing to beguile time and thought, but this pen, ink, and paper. You will see, therefore, a reason and an excuse for my scribbling on to you, till my two sheets are filled, and the hour of ten (one can't well go to bed earlier) arrived.

"You remember having often heard me speak of a very extraordinary man whom I met in Italy, and with whom I became intimate. He returned to England some months ago; and on hearing it my desire of renewing our acquaintance was so great, that I wrote to invite myself to his house. He gave me what is termed a very obliging answer, and left the choice of time to myself. You see now, most noble Festus, the reason of my journey hitherwards.

"His house, a fine old mansion, is situated about five or six miles from this town: and, as I arrived here late in the evening, and knew that his habits were reserved and peculiar, I thought it better to take 'mine ease in my inn' for this night, and defer my visit to Mordaunt Court till to-morrow morning. In truth, I was not averse to renewing an old acquaintance—not, as you in your malice would suspect, with my hostess, but with her house. Some years ago, when I was eighteen, I first made a slight acquaintance with Mordaunt at this very inn, and now, at twenty-six, I am glad to have one evening to myself on the same spot, and retrace here all that has since happened to me.

"Now, do not be alarmed; I am not going to inflict upon you the unquiet retrospect with which I have just been vexing myself; no, I will rather speak to you of my acquaintance and host to be. I have said that I first met Mordaunt some years since at this inn—an accident, for which his horse was to blame, brought us acquainted—I spent a day at his house, and was much interested in his conversation; since then, we did not meet till about two years and a half ago, when we were in Italy together. During the intermediate interval Mordaunt had married—lost his property by a lawsuit —disappeared from the world (whither none knew) for some years—recovered the estate he had lost by the death of his kinsman's heir, and shortly afterwards by that of the kinsman himself, and had become a widower, with one only child, a beautiful little girl of about four years old. He lived in perfect seclusion, avoided all intercourse with society, and seemed so perfectly unconscious of having ever seen me before, whenever in our rides or walks we met, that I could not venture to intrude myself on a reserve so rigid and unbroken as that which characterized his habits and life.

"The gloom and loneliness, however, in which Mordaunt's days were spent, were far from partaking of that selfishness so common, almost so *necessarily* common, to recluses. Wherever he had gone in his travels through Italy, he had left light and rejoicing behind him. In his residence at ——, while unknown to the great and gay, he was familiar with the outcast and the destitute. The prison, the hospital, the sordid cabins of want, the abodes (so frequent in Italy, that emporium of artists and poets) where genius struggled against poverty and its own improvidence—all these were the spots to which his visits were paid, and in which 'the very stones prated of his whereabout.' It was a strange and striking contrast to compare the sickly enthusiasm of those who flocked to Italy, to lavish their sentiments on statues, and their wealth on the modern impositions palmed upon their taste as the masterpieces of ancient art—it was a noble contrast, I say, to compare that ludicrous and idle enthusiasm with

the quiet and wholesome energy of mind and heart which led Mordaunt, not to pour forth worship and homage to the unconscious monuments of the dead, but to console, to relieve, and to sustain the woes, the wants, the feebleness, of the living.

"Yet, while he was thus employed in reducing the miseries and enlarging the happiness of others, the most settled melancholy seemed to mark himself 'as her own.' Clad in the deepest mourning, a stern and unbroken gloom sat for ever upon his countenance. I have observed, that if in his walks or rides any one, especially of the better classes, appeared to approach, he would strike into a new path. He could not bear even the scrutiny of a glance or the fellowship of a moment: and his mien, high and haughty, seemed not only to repel others, but to contradict the meekness and charity which his own actions so invariably and unequivocally displayed. It must, indeed, have been a powerful exertion of principle over feeling, which induced him voluntarily to seek the abodes and intercourse of the rude beings he blessed and relieved.

"We met at two or three places to which my weak and imperfect charity had led me, especially at the house of a sickly and distressed artist; for in former life I had intimately known one of that profession; and I have since attempted to transfer to his brethren that debt of kindness which an early death forbade me to discharge to himself. It was thus that I first became acquainted with Mordaunt's occupations and pursuits: for what ennobled his benevolence was the remarkable obscurity in which it was veiled. It was in disguise and in secret that his generosity flowed; and so studiously did he conceal his name, and hide even his features, during his brief visits to 'the house of mourning,' that only one, like myself, a close and minute investigator of whatever has once become an object of interest, could have traced his hand in the various works of happiness it had aided or created.

"One day, among some old ruins, I met him with his young daughter. By great good fortune I preserved the latter, who had wandered away from her father, from a fall of loose stones, which would inevitably have crushed her. I was myself much hurt by my effort, having received upon my shoulder a fragment of the falling stones; and thus our old acquaintance was renewed, and gradually ripened into intimacy; not, I must own, without great patience and constant endeavor on my part: for his gloom and lonely habits rendered him utterly impracticable of access to any (as Lord Aspenden would say) but a diplomatist. I saw a great deal of him during the six months I remained in Italy, and—but you know already how warmly I admire his extraordinary powers, and venerate his character.—Lord Aspeden's recall to England separated us.

"A general election ensued. I was returned for ——. I entered eagerly into domestic politics—your friendship, Lord Aspeden's kindness, my own wealth and industry, made my success almost unprecedentedly rapid. Engaged, heart and hand, in those minute yet engrossing labors for which the aspirant in parliamentary and state intrigue must unhappily forego the more enlarged though abstruser speculations of general philosophy, and of that morality which may be termed *universal* politics, I have necessarily been employed in very different pursuits from those to which Mordaunt's contemplations are devoted, yet have I often recalled his maxims, with admiration at their depth, and obtained applause for opinions which were only imperfectly filtered from the pure springs of his own.

"It is about six months since he has returned to England and he has very lately obtained a seat in parliament—so that we may trust soon to see his talents displayed upon a more public and enlarged theatre than they hitherto have been; and, though I fear his politics will be opposed to ours, I anticipate his public *debut* with that interest which genius, even when adverse to one's self, always inspires. Yet I confess that I am desirous to see and converse with him once more in the familiarity and kindness of private intercourse. The rage of party, the narrowness of sectarian zeal, soon exclude from our friendship all those who differ from our opinions; and it is like sailors holding commune for the last time with each other, before their several vessels are divided by the perilous and uncertain sea, to confer in peace and retirement for a little while with those who are about to be launched with us on that same unquiet ocean, where any momentary caprice of the winds may disjoin us for ever, and where our very union is only a sympathy in toil, and a fellowship in danger.

"Adieu, my dear Duke! it is fortunate for me that our public opinions are so closely allied, and that I may so reasonably calculate in private upon the happiness and honor of subscribing myself your affectionate friend, "C. L."

Such was the letter to which we shall leave the explanation of much that has taken place within the last three years of our tale, and which, in its tone, will serve to show the kindness and generosity of heart and feeling that mingled (rather increased than abated by the time which brought wisdom) with the hardy activity and resolute ambition that characterized the mind of our "Disowned." We now consign him to such repose as the best bedroom in the Golden Fleece can afford, and conclude the chapter.

CHAPTER LX.

Though the wilds of enchantment all vernal and bright,
In the days of delusion by fancy combined
With the vanishing phantoms of love and delight,
Abandon my soul, like a dream of the night,
And leave but a desert behind.

Be hush'd, my dark spirit, for Wisdom condemns
When the faint and the feeble deplore;
Be strong as the rock of the ocean that stems
A thousand wild waves on the shore!—CAMPBELL.

"SHALL I order the carriage round, sir?" said Harrison; "it is past one."

"Yes—yet stay—the day is fine—I will ride—let the carriage come on in the evening—see that my horse is saddled—you looked to his mash last night?"

"I did, sir. He seems wonderfully fresh:

would you please to have me stay here with the carriage, sir, till the groom comes on with the other horse?"

"Ay; do—I don't know yet how far strange servants may be welcome where I am going."

"Now, that's lucky!" said Harrison to himself, as he shut the door: "I shall have a good five hours' opportunity of making my court here. Miss Elizabeth is really a very pretty girl, and might not be a bad match. I don't see any brothers; who knows but she may succeed to the inn—hem! A servant may be ambitious as well as his master, I suppose?"

So meditating, Harrison sauntered to the stables—saw (for he was an admirable servant, and could, at a pinch, dress a horse as well as its master), that Clarence's beautiful steed received the utmost nicety of grooming which the ostler could bestow—led it himself to the door—held the stirrup for his master, with the mingled humility and grace of his profession, and then strutted away—"pride on his brow and glory in his eye"—to be the cynosure and oracle of the tap-room.

Meanwhile, Linden rode slowly onwards. As he passed that turn of the town by which he had for the first time entered it, the recollection of the eccentric and would-be gipsy, flashed upon him. "I wonder," thought he, "where that singular man is now—whether he still preserves his itinerant and woodland tastes—

'Si flumina sylvasque inglorius amet,'*

or whether, as his family increased in age or number, he has turned from his wanderings, and at length found out 'the peaceful hermitage.' How glowingly the whole scene of that night comes across me—the wild tents, their wilder habitants, the mingled bluntness, poetry, honest good-nature, and spirit of enterprise which constituted the chief's nature—the jovial meal and mirth round the wood fire, and beneath the quiet stars, and the eagerness and zest with which I then mingled in the merriment. Alas!—how ill the fastidiousness and refinement of after-days repay us for the elastic, buoyant, ready zeal with which our first youth enters into whatever is joyous, without pausing to ask if its cause and nature be congenial to our habits or kindred to our tastes. After all, there really *was* something philosophical in the romance of the jovial gipsy, childish as it seemed; and I should like much to know if the philosophy has got the better of the romance, or the romance, growing into habit, become commonplace, and lost both its philosophy and its enthusiasm. Well, after I leave Mordaunt, I will try and find out my old friend."

With this resolution, Clarence's thoughts took a new channel, and he soon entered upon Mordaunt's domain. As he rode through the park, where brake and tree were glowing in the yellow tints which Autumn, like Ambition, gilds ere it withers, he paused for a moment to recall the scene as he last beheld it. It was then Spring—Spring in its first and flushest glory—when not a blade of grass but sent a perfume to the air—the happy air,

Making sweet music while the young leaves danced:

when every cluster of the brown fern, that now lay dull and motionless around him, and amidst which the melancholy deer stood afar off, gazing upon the intruder, was vocal with the blithe melodies of the infant year—the sharp, yet sweet, voices of birds—and (heard at intervals) the chirp of the merry grasshopper, or the hum of the awakened bee. He sighed, as he now looked around, and recalled the change, both of time and season: and with that fondness of heart which causes man to knit his own little life to the varieties of Time, the signs of Heaven, or the revolutions of Nature, he recognized something kindred in the change of scene to the change of thought and feeling which years had wrought in the beholder.

Awaking from his reverie, he hastened his horse's pace, and was soon within sight of the house. Vavasour, during the few years he had possessed the place, had conducted and carried through improvements and additions to the old mansion, upon a scale equally costly and judicious. The heavy and motley magnificence of the architecture in which the house had been built remained unaltered; but a wing on either side, though exactly corresponding in style with the intermediate building, gave, by the long colonnade which ran across the one, and the stately windows which adorned the other, an air not only of grander extent, but more cheerful lightness to the massy and antiquated pile. It was, assuredly, in the point of view by

* If, unknown to fame, he love the streams and the woods.

which Clarence now approached it, a structure which possessed few superiors in point of size and effect; and harmonized so well with the noble extent of the park, the ancient woods, and the venerable avenues, that a very slight effort of imagination might have poured from the massive portals the pageantries of old days, and the gay galliard of chivalric romance with which the scene was in such accordance, and which in a former age it had so often witnessed.

Ah, little could any one who looked upon that gorgoous pile, and the broad lands which, beyond the boundaries of the park, swelled on the hills of the distant landscape, studded at frequent intervals with the spires and villages, which adorned the wide baronies of Mordaunt—little could he who thus gazed around have imagined that the owner of all he surveyed had passed the glory and verdure of his manhood in the bitterest struggles with gnawing want, and rebellious pride, and urgent passion, without friend or aid but his own haughty and supporting virtue, sentenced to bear yet in his wasted and barren heart the sign of the storm he had resisted, and the scathed token of the lightning he had braved. None but Crauford, who had his own reasons for taciturnity, and the itinerant broker, easily bribed into silence, had ever known of the *extreme* poverty from which Mordaunt had passed to his rightful possessions. It was whispered, indeed, that he had been reduced to narrow and straitened circumstances; but the whisper had been only the breath of rumor, and the imagined poverty far short of the reality: for the pride of Mordaunt (the great, almost the sole failing in his character) could not endure that all he had borne and baffled should be bared to the vulgar eye; and, by a rare anomaly of mind, indifferent as he was to renown, he was morbidly susceptible of shame.

When Clarence rung at the ivy-covered porch, and made inquiry for Mordaunt, he was informed that the latter was in the park, by the river, where most of his hours, during the day-time, were spent.

"Shall I send to acquaint him that you are come, sir?" said the servant.

"No," answered Clarence, "I will leave my horse to one of the grooms, and stroll down to the river in search of your master."

Suiting the action to the word, he dismounted, consigned his steed to the groom, and, following the direction indicated to him, bent his way to the "river."

As he descended the hill, the brook (for it did not deserve, thought it received, a higher name) opened enchantingly upon his view. Amidst the fragrant reed and the wild flower, still sweet, though fading, and tufts of tedded grass, all of which, when crushed beneath the foot, sent a mingled tribute to its sparkling waves, the wild stream took its gladsome course, now contracted by gloomy firs, which, bending over the water, cast somewhat of their own sadness upon its surface—now glancing forth from the shade, as it "broke into dimples and laughed in the sun,"—now washing the gnarled and spreading roots of some lonely ash, which, hanging over it, still and droopingly, seemed, the hermit of the scene, to moralize on its noisy and various wanderings—now winding round the hill, and losing itself at last amidst thick copses, where day did never more than wink and glimmer, and where, at night, its waters, brawling through their stony channel, seemed like a spirit's wail, and harmonized well with the scream of the gray owl, wheeling from her dim retreat, or the moaning and rare sound of some solitary deer.

As Clarence's eye roved admiringly over the scene before him, it dwelt at last upon a small building situated on the wildest part of the opposite bank: it was entirely overgrown with ivy, and the outline only remained to show the gothic antiquity of the architecture. It was a single square tower, built none knew when or wherefore, and, consequently, the spot of many vagrant guesses and wild legends among the surrounding gossips. On approaching yet nearer, he perceived, alone and seated on a little mound beside the tower, the object of his search.

Mordaunt was gazing with vacant yet earnest eye upon the waters beneath; and so intent was either his mood or look, that he was unaware of Clarence's approach. Tears fast and large were rolling from those haughty eyes, which men who shrunk from their indifferent glance little dreamed were capable of such weak and feminine emotion. Far, far through the aching void of time were the thoughts of the reft and solitary mourner; they were dwelling, in all the vivid and keen intensity of grief which dies not, upon the day when, about that

hour and on that spot, he sate, with Isabel's young cheek upon his bosom, and listened to a voice now only heard in dreams. He recalled the moment when the fatal letter, charged with change and poverty, was given to him, and the pang which had rent his heart as he looked around upon a scene over which spring had just then breathed, and which he was about to leave to a fresh summer and a new lord; and then that deep, fond, half-fearful gaze with which Isabel had met his eye, and the feeling, proud even in its melancholy, with which he had drawn towards his breast all that earth had left to him, and thanked God in his heart of hearts that *she* was spared.

"And I am once more master" (thought he), "not only of all I then held, but all which my wealthier forefathers possessed. But she who was the sharer of my sorrows and want—oh! where is she? Rather, ah! rather a hundredfold that her hand was still clasped in mine, and her spirit supporting me through poverty and trial, and her soft voice murmuring the comfort that steals away care, than to be thus heaped with wealth and honor, and *alone*—alone, where never more can come love, or hope, or the yearnings of affection, or the sweet fulness of a heart that seems fathomless in its tenderness, yet overflows! Had my lot, when she left me, been still the steepings of bitterness, the stings of penury, the moody silence of hope, the damp and chill of sunless and aidless years, which rust the very iron of the soul away; had my lot been thus, as it had been, I could have borne her death, I could have looked upon her grave, and wept not—nay, I could have comforted my own struggles with the memory of her escape; but thus, at the very moment of prosperity, to leave the altered and promising earth, 'to house with darkness and with death;' no little gleam of sunshine, no brief recompense for the agonizing past, no momentary respite between tears and the tomb. Oh, Heaven! what—what avail is a wealth which comes too late, when she, who could alone have made wealth bliss, is dust; and the light that should have gilded many and happy days, flings only a ghastly glare upon the tomb?"

Starting from these reflections, Mordaunt half-unconsciously rose, and, dashing the tears from his eyes, was about to plunge into the neighboring thicket, when looking up, he beheld Clarence, now within a few paces of him. He started, and seemed for one moment irresolute whether to meet or shun his advance, but probably deeming it too late for the latter, he banished, by one of those violent efforts with which men of proud and strong minds vanquish emotion, all outward sign of the past agony: and hastening towards his guest, greeted him with a welcome which, though from ordinary hosts it might have seemed cold, appeared to Clarence, who knew his temper, more cordial than he had ventured to anticipate.

CHAPTER LXI.

My father urged me sair,
  But my mither did na speak,
Though she looked into my face,
  Till thy heart war like to break.
—*Auld Robin Gray.*

"It is rather singular," said Lady Westborough to her daughter, as they sate alone one afternoon in the music-room at Westborough Park, "it is rather singular that Lord Ulswater should not have come yet. He said he should certainly be here before three o'clock."

"You know, mamma, that he has some military duties to detain him at W——," answered Lady Flora, bending over a drawing, in which she appeared to be earnestly engaged.

"True, my dear, and it was very kind in Lord —— to quarter the troop he commands in his native county; and very fortunate that W——, being his head-quarters, should also be so near us. But I cannot conceive that any duty can be sufficiently strong to detain him from you," added Lady Westborough, who had been accustomed all her life to a devotion unparalleled in this age. "You seem very indulgent, Flora."

"Alas!—she should rather say very indifferent," thought Lady Flora; but she did not give her thought utterance—she only looked up at her mother for a moment, and smiled faintly.

Whether there was something in that smile, or in the pale cheek of her daughter, that touched her, we know not, but Lady Westborough *was* touched; she threw her arms round Lady Flora's neck, kissed her fondly,

and said, "You do not seem well to-day, my love—are you?"

"Oh!—very—very well," answered Lady Flora, returning her mother's caress, and hiding her eyes, to which the tears had started.

"My child," said Lady Westborough, "you know that both myself and your father are very desirous to see you married to Lord Ulswater—of high and ancient birth, of great wealth, young, unexceptionable in person and character, and warmly attached to you—it would be impossible even for the sanguine heart of a parent to ask for you a more eligible match. But if the thought really does make you wretched—and yet, how can it?"

"I have consented," said Flora, gently: "all I ask is, do not speak to me more of the—the event than you can avoid."

Lady Westborough pressed her hand, sighed, and replied not.

The door opened, and the Marquis, who had within the last year become a cripple, with the great man's malady, *dira podagra*, was wheeled in on his easy chair: close behind him followed Lord Ulswater.

"I have brought you," said the marquis, who piqued himself on a vein of dry humor, "I have brought you, young lady, a consolation for my ill-humors. Few gouty old fathers make themselves as welcome as I do—eh, Ulswater!"

"Dare I apply to myself Lord Westborough's compliment?" said the young nobleman, advancing towards Lady Flora; and drawing his seat near her, he entered into that whispered conversation so significant of courtship. But there was little in Lady Flora's manner, by which an experienced eye would have detected the bride elect: no sudden blush, no downcast, yet sidelong look, no trembling of the hand, no indistinct confusion of the voice, struggling with unanalyzed emotions. No—all was calm, cold, listless; her cheek changed not tint nor hue, and her words, clear and collected, seemed to contradict whatever the low murmurs of her betrothed might well be supposed to insinuate. But, even in *his* behavior, there was something which, had Lady Westborough been less contented than she was with the externals and surface of manner, would have alarmed her for her daughter. A cloud, sullen and gloomy, sate upon his brow, and his lip, alternately, quivered with something like scorn, or was compressed with a kind of stifled passion. Even in the exultation that sparkled in his eye, when he alluded to their approaching marriage, there was an expression that almost might have been termed fierce, and certainly was as little like the true orthodox ardor of "gentle swain," as Lady Flora's sad and half unconscious coldness resembled the diffident passion of the "blushing maiden."

"You have considerably passed the time in which we expected you, my lord," said Lady Westborough, who, as a beauty herself, was a little jealous of the deference due to the beauty of her daughter.

"It is true," said Lord Ulswater, glancing towards the opposite glass, and smoothing his right eyebrow with his forefinger—"it is true, but I could not help it. I had a great deal of business to do with my troop—I have put them into a new manœuvre. Do you know, my lord (turning to the marquis), I think it very likely the soldiers may have some work on the —— of his month."

"Where, and wherefore?" asked Lord Westborough, whom a sudden twinge forced into the laconic.

"At W——. Some idle fellows hold a meeting there on that day; and if I may judge by bills and advertisements, chalkings on the walls, and, more than all, popular rumor, *I* have no doubt but what riot and sedition are intended—the magistrates are terribly frightened. I hope we shall have some cutting and hewing—I have no patience with the rebellious dogs."

"For shame—for shame!" cried Lady Westborough, who, though a worldly, was by no means an unfeeling woman; "the poor people are misguided—they mean no harm."

Lord Ulswater smiled scornfully. "I never dispute upon politics, but at the head of my men," said he, and turned the conversation.

Shortly afterwards Lady Flora, complaining of indisposition, rose, left the apartment, and retired to her own room. There she sat, motionless, and white as death, for more than an hour. A day or two afterwards Miss Trevanion received the following letter from her:—

"Most heartily, most truly do I congratulate you, my dearest Eleanor, upon your approaching marriage. You may reasonably hope for all that happiness can afford; and though you do affect (for I do not think that you *feel*) a fear lest you should not be able to fix

a character, volatile and light, like your lover's; yet, when I recollect his warmth of heart, and high sense, and your beauty, gentleness, charms, of conversation, and purely disinterested love for one whose great worldly advantages might so easily bias or adulterate affection, I own that I have no dread for your future fate; no feeling that can at all darken the brightness of anticipation. Thank you, dearest, for the delicate kindness with which you allude to *my* destiny—me, indeed, you cannot congratulate as I can you. But do not grieve for me, my own generous Eleanor: if not happy, I shall, I trust, be at least contented. My poor father implored me with tears in his eyes—my mother pressed my hand, but spoke not; and I—I whose affections were withered, and hopes strewn, should I not have been hard-hearted indeed, if they had not wrung from me a consent? And, oh! should I not be utterly lost, if in that consent which blessed them, I did not find something of peace and consolation?

"Yes, dearest, in two months, only two months. I shall be Lord Ulswater's wife; and when we meet, you shall look narrowly at me, and see if he or you have any right to complain of me.

"Have you seen Mr. Linden lately? Yet, do not answer the question; I ought not to cherish still that fatal, clinging interest for one who has so utterly forgotten me. But I do rejoice in his prosperity: and when I hear his praises, and watch his career, I feel proud that I should once have loved him! Oh, how could he be so false, so cruel, in the very midst of his professions of undying, unswerving faith to me, at the very moment when I was ill, miserable, wasting my very heart, for anxiety on his account—and such a woman too! And had he loved me, even though his letter was returned, would not his conscience have told him he deserved it, and would he not have sought me out in person, and endeavored to win from my folly his forgiveness. But without attempting to see me, or speak to me, or soothe a displeasure so natural, to leave the country in silence, almost in disdain; and when we met again, to greet me with coldness and hauteur, and never betray by word, sign, or look, that he had ever been to me more than the meerest stranger! Fool, fool, that I am, to waste another thought upon him; but I will not, and ought not to do so. In two months I shall not even have the privilege of remembrance.

"I wish, Eleanor—for I assure you that I have tried and tried—that I could find anything to like and esteem (since love is out of the question) in this man, who seems so great, and, to me, so unaccountable a favorite with my parents. His countenance and voice are so harsh and stern; his manner at once so self-complacent and gloomy; his sentiments so narrow, even in their notions of honor; his very courage so savage, and his pride so constant and offensive, that I in vain endeavor to persuade myself of his virtues, and recur, at least, to the unwearying affection for me which he professes. It is true that he has been three times refused; that I have told him I cannot love him; that I have even owned former love to another: he still continues his suit, and by dint of long hope has at length succeeded. But at times I could almost think that he married me from very hate, rather than love, there is such an artificial smoothness in his stern voice, such a latent meaning in his eye; and when he thinks I have not noticed him, I have, on suddenly turning towards him, perceived so dark and lowering an expression upon his countenance, that my heart has died within me for very fear.

"Had my mother been the least less kind, my father the least less urgent, I think, nay, I know, I could not have gained such a victory over myself as I have done in consenting to the day. But enough of this. I did not think I should have run on so long and so foolishly; but we, dearest, have been children, and girls, and women together: we have loved each other with such fondness and unreserve that opening my heart to you seems only another phrase for thinking aloud.

"However, in two months I shall have no right even to thoughts—perhaps I may not even love you—till then, dearest Eleanor, I am, as ever, your affectionate and faithful friend,

"F. A."

Had Lord Westborough, indeed, been "less urgent," or her mother "less kind," nothing could ever have wrung from Lady Flora her consent to a marriage so ungenial and ill-omened.

Thrice had Lord Ulswater (then Lord Borodaile) been refused, before finally accepted; and those who judge only from the ordinary effects of pride, would be astonished that he should have still persevered. But his pride was that deep-rooted feeling which, so far from being repelled by a single blow, fights stubbornly and doggedly onward, till the battle is over and its object gained. From the moment he had resolved to address Lady Flora Ardenne, he had also resolved to win her. For three years, despite of a refusal, first gently, then more peremptorily, urged, he fixed himself in her train. He gave out that he was her affianced. In all parties, in all places, he forced himself near her, unheeding alike of her frowns or indifference; and his rank, his hauteur, his fierceness of mien, and acknowledged courage, kept aloof all the less arrogant and hardy pretenders to Lady Flora's favor. For this, indeed, she rather thanked than blamed him; and it was the only thing which in the least reconciled her modesty to his advances, or her pride to his presumption.

He had been prudent as well as bold. The father he had served, and the mother he had won. Lord Westborough, addicted a little to politics, a good deal to show, and devotedly to gaming, was often greatly and seriously embarrassed. Lord Ulswater, even during the life of his father (who was lavishly generous to him), was provided with the means of relieving his intended father-in-law's necessities; and caring little for money in comparison to a desired object, he was willing enough, we do not say to *bribe*, but to *influence* Lord Westborough's consent. These matters of arrange-

ment were by no means concealed from the marchioness, who, herself ostentatious and profuse, was in no small degree benefitted by them; and though they did not solely procure, yet they certainly contributed to conciliate, her favor.

Few people are designedly and systematically wicked: even the worst find good motives for bad deeds; and are as intent upon discovering glosses for conduct, to deceive themselves, as to delude others. What wonder, then, that poor Lady Westborough, never too rigidly addicted to self-examination, and viewing all things through a very worldly medium, saw only, in the alternate art and urgency employed against her daughter's real happiness, the various praiseworthy motives of permanently disentangling Lady Flora from an unworthy attachment, of procuring for her an establishment proportioned to her rank, and a husband whose attachment, already shown by such singular perseverance, was so likely to afford her everything which, in Lady Westborough's eyes, constituted felicity.

All our friends, perhaps, desire our happiness; but, then, it must invariably be in their own way. What a pity that they do not employ the same zeal in making us happy *in ours!*

CHAPTER LXII.

If thou criest after Knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;
If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;
Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.
—*Proverbs*, ch. ii. ver. 3, 4, 5.

While Clarence was thus misjudged by one whose affections and conduct he, in turn, naturally misinterpreted—while Lady Flora was alternately struggling against and submitting to the fate which Lady Westborough saw approach with gladness—the father with indifference, and the bridegroom with a pride that partook less of rapture than revenge, our unfortunate lover was endeavoring to glean, from Mordaunt's conversation and example, somewhat of that philosophy so rare except in the theories of the civilized and the occasional practice of the barbarian, which, though it cannot give us a charm against misfortune, bestows, at least, upon us the energy to support it.

We have said already, that when the first impression produced by Mordaunt's apparent pride and coldness wore away, it required little penetration to discover the benevolence and warmth of his mind. But none ignorant of his original disposition, or the misfortunes of his life, could ever have pierced the depth of his self-sacrificing nature, or measured the height of his lofty and devoted virtue. Many men may, perhaps, be found, who will give up to duty a cherished wish, or even a darling vice, but few will ever renounce to it their rooted *tastes*, or the indulgence of those habits which have almost become, by long use, their happiness itself. Naturally melancholy and thoughtful, feeding the sensibilities of his heart upon fiction, and though addicted to the cultivation of reason rather than fancy, having perhaps more of the deeper and acuter characteristics of the poet, than those calm and half callous properties of nature, supposed to belong to the metaphysician and the calculating moralist, Mordaunt was above all men fondly addicted to solitude, and inclined to contemplations less useful than profound. The untimely death of Isabel, whom he had loved with that love which is the vent of hoarded and passionate musings, long nourished upon romance, and lavishing the wealth of a soul that overflows with secreted tenderness, upon the *first* object that can bring reality to fiction — that event had not only darkened melancholy into gloom, but had made loneliness still more dear to his habits by all the ties of memory, and all the consecrations of regret. The companionless wanderings—the midnight closet—the thoughts which, as Hume said of his own, could not exist in the world, but were all busy with life in seclusion: these were rendered sweeter than ever to a mind for which the ordinary objects of the world were now utterly loveless; and the musings of solitude had become, as it were, a rightful homage and offering to the dead! We may form, then, some idea of the extent to which, in Mordaunt's character, principle predominated over inclination, and regard for others over the love of self, when we see him tearing his spirit from its beloved retreats and abstracted contemplations, and devoting it to duties from which its fastidious and refined characteristics were particu-

larly calculated to revolt. When we have considered his attachment to the hermitage, we can appreciate the virtue which made him among the most active citizens in the great world; when we have considered the natural selfishness of grief, the pride of philosophy, the indolence of meditation, the eloquence of wealth, which says, "rest and toil not," and the temptation within, which says, "obey the voice;"—when we have considered these, we can perhaps do justice to the man who, sometimes on foot and in the coarsest attire, travelled from inn to inn, and from hut to hut; who made human misery the object of his search, and human happiness of his desire; who, breaking aside an aversion to rude contact, almost feminine in its extreme, voluntarily sought the meanest companions, and subjected himself to the coarsest intrusions; for whom the wail of affliction, or the moan of hunger, was as a summons which allowed neither hesitation nor appeal; who seemed possessed of an ubiquity for the purposes of good, almost resembling that attributed to the wanderer in the magnificent fable of "Melmoth," for the temptations to evil; who, by a zeal and labor that brought to habit and inclination a thousand martyrdoms, made his life a very hour-glass, in which each sand was a good deed or a virtuous design.

Many plunge into public affairs, to which they have had a previous distaste, from the desire of losing the memory of a private affliction; but so far from wishing to heal the wounds of remembrance by the anodynes which society can afford, it was only in retirement that Mordaunt found the flowers from which balm could be distilled. Many are through vanity magnanimous, and benevolent from the selfishness of fame; but, so far from seeking applause, where he bestowed favor, Mordaunt had sedulously shrouded himself in darkness and disguise. And by that increasing propensity to quiet, so often found among those addicted to lofty or abstruse contemplation, he had conquered the ambition of youth with the philosophy of a manhood that had forestalled the affections of age. Many, in short, have become great or good to the community by individual motives easily resolved into common and earthly elements of desire; but they who inquire diligently into human nature have not often the exalted happiness to record a character like Mordaunt's, actuated purely by a systematic principle of love, which covered mankind, as heaven does earth, with an atmosphere of light extending to the remotest corners, and penetrating the darkest recesses.

It was one of those violent and gusty evenings, which give to an English autumn something rude, rather than gentle, in its characteristics, that Mordaunt and Clarence sate together,

And sowed the hours with various seeds of talk.

The young Isabel, the only living relic of the departed one, sat by her father's side, upon the floor; and, though their discourse was far beyond the comprehension of her years, yet did she seem to listen with a quiet and absorbed attention. In truth, child as she was, she so loved, and almost worshipped, her father, that the very tones of his voice had in them a charm, which could always vibrate, as it were, to her heart, and hush her into silence; and that melancholy and deep, though somewhat low voice, when it swelled or trembled with *thought*—which in Mordaunt *was feeling*—made her sad, she knew not why; and when she heard it, she would creep to his side, and put her little hand on his, and look up at him with eyes, in whose tender and glistening blue the spirit of her mother seemed to float. She was serious, and thoughtful, and loving, beyond the usual capacities of childhood; perhaps her solitary condition, and habits of constant intercourse with one so grave as Mordaunt, and who always, when not absent on his excursions of charity, loved her to be with him, had given to her mind a precocity of feeling, and tinctured the simplicity of infancy with what ought to have been the colors of after years. She was not inclined to the sports of her age—she loved, rather, and above all else, to sit by Motdaunt's side, and silently pore over some book, or feminine task, and to steal her eyes every now and then away from her employment, in order to watch his motions, or provide for whatever her vigilant kindness of heart imagined he desired. And often, when he saw her fairy and lithe form hovering about him, and attending on his wants, or her beautiful countenance glow with pleasure, when she fancied she supplied them, he almost believed that Isabel yet lived, though in another form, and that a love, so intense and holy as

hers had been, might transmigrate, but could not perish.

The young Isabel had displayed a passion for music so early, that it almost seemed innate; and as, from the mild and wise education she received, her ardor had never been repelled on the one hand or overstrained on the other, so, though she had but just passed her seventh year, she had attained to a singular proficiency in the art—an art that suited well with her lovely face, and fond feelings, and innocent heart; and it was almost heavenly, in the literal acceptation of the word, to hear her sweet, though childish voice, swell along the still pure airs of summer, and her angelic countenance all rapt and brilliant with the enthusiasm which her own melodies created.

Never had she borne the bitter breath of unkindness, nor writhed beneath that customary injustice which punishes in others the sins of our own temper, and the varied fretfulness of caprice; and so she had none of the fears and meannesses, and *acted* untruths which so usually pollute and debase the innocence of childhood. But the promise of her ingenuous brow (over which the silken hair flowed, parted into two streams of gold), and of the fearless but tender eyes, and of the quiet smile which sat for ever upon the rosy mouth, like Joy watching Love, was kept in its fullest extent by the mind, from which all thoughts, pure, kind, and guileless flowed, like waters from a well, which a spirit has made holy for its own dwelling.

On this evening, we have said that she sat by her father's side, and listened, though she only in part drank in its sense, to his conversation with his guest.

The room was of great extent, and surrounded with books, over which, at close intervals, the busts of the departed Great and the immortal Wise looked down. There was the sublime beauty of Plato, the harsher and more earthly countenance of Tully, the only Roman (except Lucretius) who might have been a Greek. There the mute marble gave the broad front of Bacon (itself a world)—and there the features of Locke showed how the mind wears away the links of flesh, with the file of thought. And other departments of those works which remind us that man is made little lower than the angels, the stern face of the Florentine who sung of hell, contrasted with the quiet grandeur enthroned on the fair brow of the English poet—"blind but bold,"—and there the glorious, but genial countenance of him who has found in all humanity a friend, conspicuous among sages and minstrels, claimed brotherhood with all.

The fire burned clear and high, casting a rich twilight (for there was no other light in the room) over that gothic chamber, and shining cheerily upon the varying countenance of Clarence, and the more contemplative features of his host. In the latter might you see that care and thought had been harsh, but not unhallowed, companions. In the lines which crossed his expanse of brow, time seemed to have buried many hopes; but his mien and air, if loftier, were gentler than in younger days; and though they had gained somewhat in dignity, had lost greatly in reserve.

There was in the old chamber, with its fretted roof and ancient "garniture," the various books which surrounded it, walls that the learned built to survive themselves, and in the marble likenesses of those for whom thought had won eternity, joined to the hour, the breathing quiet, and the heart-light, by whose solitary rays we love best in the eves of autumn to discourse on graver or subtler themes—there was in all this a spell which seemed particularly to invite and to harmonize with that tone of conversation, some portions of which we are now about to relate.

"How loudly," said Clarence, "that last gust swept by—you remember that beautiful couplet in Tibullus—

> Quam juvat immites ventos audire cubantem,
> Et dominam tenero detinuisse sinu."*

"Ay," answered Mordaunt, with a scarcely audible sigh, "that is the feeling of the lover at the '*immites ventos*,' but *we* sages of the lamp make our mistress Wisdom, and when the winds rage without, it is to *her* that we cling. See how, from the same object different conclusions are drawn! the most common externals of nature, the wind and the wave, the stars and the heavens, the very earth on which we tread, never excite in different bosoms the same ideas; and it is from our own hearts, and not from an outward source, that we draw the hues which color the web of our existence."

* Sweet on our couch to hear the winds above,
And cling with closer heart to her we love.

"It is true," answered Clarence. "You remember that in two specks of the moon the enamored maiden perceived two unfortunate lovers, while the ambitious curate conjectured that they were the spires of a cathedral? But it is not only to our *feelings*, but also to our *reasonings*, that we give the colors which they wear. The moral, for instance, which to one man seems atrocious, to another is divine. On the tendency of the same work what three people will agree? And how shall the most sanguine moralist hope to benefit mankind when he finds that, by the multitude, his wisest endeavors to instruct are often considered but as instruments to pervert?"

"I believe," answered Mordaunt, "that it is from our ignorance that our contentions flow; we debate with strife and with wrath, with bickering and with hatred, but of the thing debated *upon* we remain in the profoundest darkness. Like the laborers of Babel, while we endeavor in vain to express our meaning to each other, the fabric, by which, for a common end, we would have ascended to heaven from the ills of earth remains for ever unadvanced and incomplete. Let us hope that knowledge is the universal language which shall re-unite us. As, in their sublime allegory, the Ancients signified that only through virtue we arrive at honor, so let us believe that only through knowledge can we arrive at virtue!"

"And yet," said Clarence, "that seems a melancholy truth for the mass of the people, who have no time for the researches of wisdom."

"Not so much so as at first we might imagine," answered Mordaunt: "the few smooth all paths for the many. The precepts of knowledge it is difficult to extricate from error; but, once discovered, they gradually pass into maxims; and thus what the sage's life was consumed in acquiring become the acquisition of a moment to posterity. Knowledge is like the atmosphere—in order to dispel the vapor and dislodge the frost, our ancestors felled the forest, drained the marsh, and cultivated the waste, and we now breathe, without an effort, in the purified air and the chastened climate, the result of the labor of generations and the progress of ages! As to-day, the common mechanic may equal in science, however inferior in genius, the friar * whom his contemporaries feared as a magician, so the opinions which now startle as well as astonish, may be received hereafter as acknowledged axioms, and pass into ordinary practice. We cannot even tell how far the sanguine* theories of certain philosophers deceive them when they anticipate, for future ages, a knowledge which shall bring perfection to the mind, baffle the diseases of the body, and even protract to a date now utterly unknown the final destination of life: for Wisdom is a palace of which only the vestibule has been entered; nor can we guess what treasures are hid in those chambers, of which the experience of the past can afford us neither anology nor clue."

"It was, then," said Clarence, who wished to draw his companion into speaking of himself, "it was, then, from your addiction to studies not ordinarily made the subject of acquisition that you date (pardon me) your generosity, your devotedness, your feeling for others, and your indifference to self?"

"You flatter me," said Mordaunt, modestly; (and we may be permitted to crave attention to his reply, since it unfolds the secret springs of a character so singularly good and pure)—"you flatter me; but I will answer you, as if you had put the question without the compliment; nor, perhaps, will it be wholly uninstructive, as it will certainly be new, to sketch, without recurrence to events, or what I may call exterior facts, a brief and progressive History of One Human Mind.

"Our first era of life is under the influence of the primitive feelings: we are pleased, and we laugh; hurt, and we weep: we vent our little passions the moment they are excited; and so much of novelty have we to *perceive*, that we have little leisure to *reflect*. By-and-by, fear teaches us to restrain our feelings: when displeased, we seek to revenge the displeasure, and are punished; we find the excess of our joy, our sorrow, our anger, alike considered criminal, and chidden into restraint. From harshness we become acquainted with deceit: the promise made is not fulfilled, the threat not executed, the fear falsely excited, and the hope wilfully disappointed: we are

* Roger Bacon.

* See Condorcet on the Progress of the Human Mind: written some years after the supposed date of this conversation, but in which there is a slight, but eloquent and affecting view of the philosophy to which Mordaunt refers.

surrounded by systematized delusion, and we imbibe the contagion.

"From being forced into concealing the thoughts which we do conceive, we begin to affect those which we do not: so early do we learn the two main tasks of life, To Suppress and To Feign that our memory will not carry us beyond that period of artifice to a state of nature when the twin principles of veracity and belief were so strong as to lead the philosophers of a modern school into the error of terming them innate.*

"It was with a mind restless and confused—feelings which were alternately chilled and counterfeited (the necessary results of my first tuition), that I was driven to mix with others of my age. They did not like me, nor do I blame them. *Les manières que l'on neglige comme de petites choses, sont souvent ce qui fait que les hommes décident de vous en bien ou en mal.*† Manner is acquired so imperceptibly that we have given its origin to nature, as we do the origin of all else for which our ignorance can find no other source. Mine was unprepossessing: I was disliked, and I returned the feeling; I sought not, and I was shunned. Then I thought that all were unjust to me, and I grew bitter, and sullen, and morose: I cased myself in the stubbornness of pride, I pored over the books which spoke of the worthlessness of man, and I indulged the discontent of myself by brooding over the frailties of my kind.

"My passions were strong, they told me to *suppress* them.—The precept was old, and seemed wise—I attempted to enforce it. I had already begun, in earlier infancy, the lesson: I had now only to renew it. Fortunately I was diverted from this task, or, my mind, in conquering its passions, would have conquered its powers. I learnt, in after lessons, that the passions are not to be suppressed—they are to be directed: and when directed, rather to be strengthened than subdued.

"Observe how a word may influence a life: a man whose opinion I esteemed, made of me the casual and trite remark, that 'my nature was one of which it was impossible to augur evil or good, it might be extreme in either.' This observation roused me into thought: could I indeed be all that was good or evil? had I the choice, and could I hesitate which to choose? but what was good and what was evil? that seemed the most difficult inquiry.

"I asked and received no satisfactory reply;—in the words of Erasmus—*totius negotii caput ac fontem ignorant, divinant, ac delirant omnes:** so I resolved myself to inquire and to decide. I subjected to my scrutiny the moralist and the philosopher: I saw that on all sides they disputed, but I saw that they *grew virtuous in the dispute;* they uttered much that was absurd about the origin of good, but much more that was exalted in its praise: and I never rose from any work which treated ably upon morals, whatever were its peculiar opinions, but I felt my breast enlightened, and my mind ennobled by my studies. The professor of one sect commanded me to avoid the dogmatist of another, as the propagator of moral poison; and the dogmatist retaliated on the professor; but I avoided neither: I read both, and turned all 'into honey and fine gold.' No inquiry into wisdom, however superficial, is undeserving attention. The vagaries of the idlest fancy will often chance, as it were, upon the most useful discoveries of truth, and serve as a guide to after and to slower disciples of wisdom; even as the peckings of birds in an unknown country, indicate to the adventurous seaman the best and the safest fruits.

"From the *works* of men I looked into their *lives*, and I found that there was a vast difference (though I am not aware that it has before been remarked) between those who cultivated *a talent*, and those who cultivated *the mind;* I found that the mere men of genius were often erring or criminal in their lives; but that vice or crime in the disciples of philosophy was strikingly unfrequent and rare. The extremest culture of reason had not, it is true, been yet carried far enough to preserve the laborer from follies of opinion, but a moderate culture had been sufficient to deter him from the vices of life. And only to the sons of Wisdom, as of old to the sages of the East, seemed given the unerring star, which, through the travail of Earth, and the clouds of Heaven, led them at the last to their God!

"When I gleaned this fact from biography,

* Reid on the Human Mind.

† Those manners which one neglects as trifling, are often the cause of the opinion, good or bad, formed of you by men.

* All ignore, guess, and rave about the head and fountain of the whole question at issue.

I paused, and said—'Then must there be something excellent in Wisdom, if it can, even in its most imperfect disciples, be thus beneficial to morality.' Pursuing this sentiment, I redoubled my researches, and behold the object of my quest was won! I had before sought a satisfactory answer to the question, 'What is Virtue?' from men of a thousand tenets, and my heart had rejected all I had received. 'Virtue,' said some, and my soul bowed reverently to the dictate, 'Virtue is Religion.' I heard and humbled myself before the Divine Book. Let me trust that I did not humble myself in vain! But the dictate satisfied less than it awed; for, either it limited Virtue to the mere belief, or, by extending it to the practice of Religion, it extended also inquiry to the method in which the practice should be applied. But with the first interpretation of the dictate, who could rest contented?—for, while in the perfect enforcement of the tenets of our faith, all virtue may be found, so in the passive, and the mere belief in its divinity, we find only an engine as applicable to evil as to good:—the torch which should illumine the altar, has also lighted the stake, and the zeal of the persecutor has been no less sincere than the heroism of the martyr. Rejecting, therefore, this interpretation, I accepted the other: I felt in my heart, and I rejoiced as I felt it, that in the practice of Religion the body of all virtue could be found. But, in that conviction, had I at once an answer to my inquiries?—Could the mere desire of good be sufficient to attain it—and was the *attempt* at virtue synonymous with *success?* On the contrary, have not those most desirous of obeying the precepts of God often sinned the most against their spirit, and has not zeal been frequently the most ardent when crime was the most rife.* But what, if neither sincerity nor zeal was sufficient to constitute goodness—what, if in the breasts of the best intentioned, crime had been fostered, the more dangerously, because the more disguised—what ensued?—That the Religion which they professed, they believed, they adored, *they had also misunderstood;* and that the precepts to be drawn from the Holy Book, they had darkened by their ignorance, or perverted by their passions! Here, then, at once, my enigma was solved: here, then, at once, I was led to the goal of my inquiry!—Ignorance, and the perversion of passion, are but the same thing—though under different names; for, only by our ignorance are our passions perverted. Therefore what followed?—that, if by ignorance the greatest of God's gifts had been turned to evil, Knowledge alone was the light by which even the pages of Religion should be read. It followed, that the Providence that knew that the nature it had created should be constantly in exercise, and that only through labor comes improvement, had wisely ordained that we should toil even for the blessing of its holiest and clearest laws. It had given us, in Religion, as in this magnificent world, treasures and harvests which might be called forth in incalculable abundance; but had decreed that through our exertions only *should* they be called forth;—a palace more gorgeous than the palaces of enchantment was before us, but its chambers were a labyrinth which required a clue.

"What was that clue? Was it to be sought for in the corners of earth, or was it not beneficently centred in ourselves? Was it not the exercise of a power easy for us to use, if we would dare to do so? Was it not the simple exertion of the discernment granted to us for all else?—Was it not the exercise of our reason? 'Reason!' cried the Zealot, 'pernicious and hateful instrument, it is fraught with peril to yourself and to others; do not think for a moment of employing an engine so fallacious and so dangerous.' But I listened not to the Zealot: could the steady and bright torch which, even where the Star of Bethlehem had withheld its diviner light, had guided some patient and unwearied steps to the very throne of Virtue, become but a deceitful meteor to him who kindled it *for the aid of Religion*, and in an eternal cause? Could it be perilous to task our reason, even to the utmost, in the investigation of the true utility and hidden

* There can be no doubt that they who exterminated the Albigenses, established the Inquisition, lighted the fires at Smithfield, were actuated, not by a desire to do evil, but (monstrous as it may seem) to do good;—not to counteract, but to enforce what they believed the wishes of the Almighty; so that a good intention, without the enlightenment to direct it to a fitting object, may be as pernicious to human happiness as one the most fiendish. We are told of a whole people, who used to murder their guests, not from ferocity or interest, but from the pure and praiseworthy motive *of obtaining the good qualities*, which they believed by the murder of the deceased devolved upon them!

wisdom of the works of God, when God himself had ordained that only through *some* exertion of our reason should we know either from Nature or Revelation that He himself existed? 'But,' cried the Zealot again, 'but mere mortal wisdom teaches men presumption, and presumption, doubt.' 'Pardon me,' I answered, 'it is not Wisdom, but Ignorance, which teaches men presumption; *Genius* may be sometimes arrogant, but nothing is so diffident as *Knowledge*.' 'But,' resumed the Zealot, 'those accustomed to subtle inquiries may dwell only on the minutiæ of faith—inexplicable, because useless to explain, and argue from those minutiæ against the grand and universal truth.' 'Pardon me again: it is the petty, not the enlarged, mind, which prefers casuistry to conviction; it is the confined and short sight of Ignorance which, unable to comprehend the great bearings of truth, pries only into its narrow and obscure corners, occupying itself in scrutinizing the atoms of a part, while the eagle eye of Wisdom contemplates, in its widest scale, the luminous majesty of the whole. Survey our faults, our errors, our vices—fearful and fertile field; trace them to their causes—all those causes resolve themselves into *one*—Ignorance!—For, as we have already seen, that from this source flow the abuses of Religion, so, also, from this source flow the abuses of all other blessings—of talents, of riches, of power: for we abuse things, either because we know not their real use, or because, with an equal blindness, we imagine the abuse more adapted to our happiness. But as ignorance, then, is the sole spring of evil—so, as the antidote to ignorance is knowledge, *it necessarily* follows, that, were we *consummate* in knowledge, we should be perfect in good. He, therefore, who retards the progress of intellect, countenances crime—nay, to a state, is the greatest of criminals; while he who circulates that mental light more precious than the visual, is the holiest improver, and the surest benefactor of his race! Nor let us believe, with the dupes of a shallow policy, that there exists upon the earth *one* prejudice that can be called salutary or *one* error beneficial to perpetuate. As the petty fish which is fabled to possess the property of arresting the progress of the largest vessel to which it clings, even so may a single prejudice, unnoticed or despised, more than the adverse blast, or the dead calm, delay the barque of Knowledge in the vast seas of Time.

"It is true that the sanguineness of philanthropists may have carried them too far; it is true (for the experiment has not yet been made) that God *may* have denied to us, in this state, the consummation of knowledge, and the consequent perfection in good; but because we cannot be perfect, are we to resolve we will be evil. One step in knowledge is one step from sin: one step from sin is one step nearer to Heaven. Oh! never let us be deluded by those, who, for *political* motives, would adulterate the divinity of *religious* truths: never let us believe that our Father in Heaven rewards most the one talent unemployed, or that prejudice, and indolence, and folly, find the most favor in His sight! The very heathen has bequeathed to us a nobler estimate of his nature; and the same sentence which so sublimely declares 'TRUTH IS THE BODY OF GOD,' declares also 'AND LIGHT IS HIS SHADOW.' *

"Persuaded, then, that knowledge contained the key to virtue, it was to knowledge that I applied. The first grand lesson which it taught me was the solution of a phrase most hacknied, least understood, viz, '*common sense*.' † It is in the Portico of the Greek sage that that phrase has received its legitimate explanation; it is there we are taught that 'common sense' signifies 'the sense of the common interest.' Yes! it is the most beautiful truth in morals that we have no such thing as a distinct or divided interest from our race. In their welfare is ours; and, by choosing the broadest paths to effect their happiness, we choose the surest and the shortest to our own. As I read and pondered over these truths, I was sensible that a great change was working a fresh world out of the former materials of my mind. My passions, which before I had checked into uselessness, or exerted to destruction, now started forth in a nobler shape, and prepared for a new direction: instead of urging me to individual aggrandisement, they panted for universal good, and coveted the reward of Ambition, only for the triumphs of Benevolence.

"This is one stage of virtue—I cannot resist the belief that there is a higher: it is when we begin to love virtue, not for its objects, but itself. For there are in knowledge these two

* Plato. † Κοινονοημοσύνη—Sensus communis.

excellences:—first, that it offers to every man, the most selfish, and the most exalted, his peculiar inducement to good. It says to the former 'Serve mankind, and you serve yourself;' to the latter, 'In choosing the best means to secure your own happiness, you will have the sublime inducement of promoting the happiness of mankind.'

"The second excellence of Knowledge is that even the selfish man, when he has once begun to love Virtue from little motives, loses the motives as he increases the love; and at last worships the deity, where before he only coveted the gold upon its altar. And thus I learned to love Virtue solely for its own beauty. I said with one who, among much dross, has many particles of ore, 'If it be not estimable in itself, I can see nothing estimable in following it for the sake of a bargain.' *

"I looked round the world, and saw often Virtue in rags, and Vice in purple: the former conduces to happiness, it is true, but the happiness lies *within*, and not in externals. I contemned the deceitful folly with which writers have termed it poetical justice to make the good ultimately prosperous in wealth, honor, fortunate love, or successful desires. Nothing false, even in poetry, can be just; and that pretended moral is, of all, the falsest. Virtue is not more exempt than Vice from the ills of fate, but it contains within itself always an energy to resist them, and sometimes an anodyne to soothe—to repay your quotation from Tibullus:

Crura sonant ferro—sed canit inter opus! †

"When in the depths of my soul I set up that divinity of this nether earth, which Brutus never really understood, if, because unsuccessful in its efforts, he doubted its existence, I said in the proud prayer with which I worshipped it, 'Poverty may humble my lot, but it shall not debase thee; Temptation may shake my nature, but not the rock on which thy temple is based; Misfortune may wither all the hopes that have blossomed around thine altar, but I will sacrifice dead leaves when the flowers are no more. Though all that I have loved perish—all that I have coveted fade away, I may murmur at fate, but I will have no voice but that of homage for thee! Nor, while thou smilest upon my way, would I exchange with the loftiest and happiest of thy foes!' More bitter than aught of what I then dreamed have been my trials, *but I have fulfilled my vow!*

"I believe that alone to be a true description of Virtue, which makes it all-sufficient to itself—that alone a just portraiture of its excellence, which does not lessen its internal power by exaggerating its outward advantages, nor degrade its nobility by dwelling only on its rewards. The grandest moral of ancient lore has ever seemed to me that which the picture of Prometheus affords: in whom neither the shaking earth, nor the rending heaven, nor the rock without, nor the vulture within, could cause regret for past benevolence, or terror for future evil, or envy, even amidst tortures, for the dishonorable prosperity of his insulter! * Who, that has glowed over this exalted picture, will tell us that we must make Virtue prosperous in order to allure to it, or clothe Vice with misery in order to revolt us from its image! Oh! who, on the contrary, would not learn to adore Virtue, from the bitterest sufferings of such a votary, a hundred-fold more than he would learn to love Vice from the gaudiest triumphs of its most fortunate disciples?"

Something there was in Mordaunt's voice and air, and the impassioned glow of his countenance, that, long after he had ceased, thrilled in Clarence's heart, "like the remembered tone of a mute lyre." And when a subsequent event led him at rash moments to doubt whether Virtue was indeed the chief good, Linden recalled the words of that night, and the enthusiasm with which they were uttered, repented that in his doubt he had wronged the truth, and felt that there *is* a power in the deep heart of man to which even Destiny is submitted!

CHAPTER LXIII.

Will you hear the letter?
* * * *
This is the motley-minded gentleman that I have before met in the forest.—*As You Like it.*

A MORNING or two after the conversation with which our last chapter concluded, Clar-

* Lord Shaftesbury.

† The chains clank on its limbs, but it sings amidst its tasks.

* Mercury.—See the Prometheus of Æschylus.

ence received the following letter from the Duke of Haverfield:—

'Your letter, my dear Linden, would have been answered before, but for an occurrence which is generally supposed to engross the whole attention of the persons concerned in it. Let me see—ay, *three*—yes, I have been *exactly* three days married! Upon my honor, there is much less in the event that one would imagine; and the next time it happens, I will not put myself to such amazing trouble and inconvenience about it. But one buys wisdom only by experience. Now, however, that I have communicated to you the fact, I expect you, in the first place, to excuse my negligence for not writing before; for (as I know you are fond of the *literæ humaniores*, I will give the sentiment the dignity of a quotation)—

Un veritable amant ne connoit point d'amis;*

and though I have been three days married, I am still a lover! In the second place, I expect you to be very grateful that, all things considered, I write to you *so soon;* it would indeed not be an ordinary inducement that could make me 'put pen to paper'—[Is not that the true vulgar, commercial, academical, metaphorical epistolary style?]—so shortly after the fatal ceremony. So, had I nothing to say but in reply to your comments on state affairs—(hang them!)—or in applause of your Italian friend, of whom I say, as Charles II. said of the honest yoeman—'I can admire virtue, though I can't imitate it!' I think it highly probable that your letter might still remain in a certain box of tortoise-shell and gold (formerly belonging to the great Richelieu, and now in my possession,) in which I at this instant descry, 'with many a glance of woe and boding dire,' sundry epistles, in manifold hand-writings, all classed under the one fearful denomination—'unanswered.'

"No, my good Linden, my heart is inditing of a better matter than this. Listen to me, and then stay at your host's or order your swiftest steed, as seems most meet to you.

"You said rightly that Miss Trevanion, now her Grace of Haverfield, was the intimate friend of Lady Flora Ardenne. I have often talked to her—viz., Eleanor, not Lady Flora—about you, and was renewing the conversation yesterday, when your letter, accidentally lying before me, reminded me of you. Sundry little secrets passed in due conjugal course, from her possession into mine. I find that you have been believed, by Lady Flora, to have played the perfidious with La Meronville—that she never knew of your application to her father, and his reply—that, on the contrary, she accused you of indifference in going abroad without attempting to obtain an interview, or excuse your supposed infidelity—that her heart is utterly averse to an union with that odious Lord Boro—Bah—I mean Lord Ulswater; and that—prepare, Linden—she still cherishes your memory, even through time, change, and fancied desertion, with a tenderness which—which—deuce take it, I never could write sentiment—but you understand me; so I will not conclude the phrase. 'Nothing in oratory,' said my cousin D——, who was, *entre nous*, more honest than eloquent, 'like a break!'—'*down!* you should have added,' said I.

"I now, my dear Linden, leave you to your fate. For my part, though I own Lord Ulswater is a lord whom ladies in love with the etcæteras of married pomp might well desire, yet I do think it would be no difficult matter for you to eclipse him! I cannot, it is true, advise you to run away with Lady Flora. *Gentlemen* don't run away with the daughters of gentlemen; but, without running away, you may win your betrothed and Lord Ulswater's intended.—A distinguished member of the House of Commons, owner of Scarsdale, and representative of the most ancient branch of the Talbots—*mon Dieu!* you might marry a queen dowager, and decline settlements!

"And so, committing thee to the guidance of that winged god, who, if three days afford any experience, has made thy friend forsake pleasure only to find happiness, I bid thee, most gentle Linden, farewell.

"HAVERFIELD."

Upon reading this letter, Clarence felt as a man suddenly transformed! From an exterior of calm and apathy, at the bottom of which lay one bitter and corroding recollection, he passed at once into a state of emotion, wild, agitated, and confused; yet, *amidst* all, was foremost a burning and intense hope, which for long years he had not permitted himself to form.

He descended into the breakfast parlor. Mordaunt, whose hours of *appearing*, though not of rising, were much later than Clarence's, was not yet down; and our lover had full leisure to form his plans, before his host made his *entrée*.

"Will you ride to-day?" said Mordaunt: "there are some old ruins in the neighborhood, well worth the trouble of a visit."

"I grieve to say," answered Clarence, "that I must take my leave of you. I have received intelligence, this morning, which may greatly influence my future life, and by which I am obliged to make an excursion to another part of the country, nearly a day's journey, on horseback."

Mordaunt looked at his guest, and conjectured by his heightened color, and an embarrassment which he in vain endeavored to conceal, that the journey might have some cause for its suddenness and despatch which the young senator had his peculiar reasons for concealing. Algernon contented himself, therefore, with expressing his regret at Linden's abrupt departure, without incurring the indiscreet hospitality of pressing a longer sojourn beneath his roof.

Immediately after breakfast, Clarence's horse was brought to the door, and Harrison received orders to wait with the carriage at W——, until his master returned. Not a little surprised, we trow, was the worthy valet at his master's

* 'A true lover recognizes no friends.'—CORNEILLE.

sudden attachment to equestrian excursions. Mordaunt accompanied his visitor through the park, and took leave of him with a warmth which sensibly touched Clarence, in spite of the absence and excitement of his thoughts; indeed, the unaffected and simple character of Linden, joined to his acute, bold, and cultivated mind, had taken strong hold of Mordaunt's interest and esteem.

It was a mild autumnal morning, but thick clouds in the rear prognosticated rain; and the stillness of the wind, the low flight of the swallows, and the lowing of the cattle, slowly gathering towards the nearest shelter within their appointed boundaries, confirmed the inauspicious omen. Clarence had passed the town of W———, and was entering into a road singularly hilly, when he "was aware," as the quaint old writers of former days expressed themselves, of a tall stranger, mounted on a neat, well trimmed, galloway, who had for the last two minutes been advancing towards a closely parallel line with Clarence, and had, by sundry glances and hems, denoted a desire of commencing acquaintance and conversation with his fellow traveller.

At last he summoned courage, and said, with a respectful, though somewhat free, air, "That is a very fine horse of yours, sir—I have seldom seen so fast a walker: if all his other paces are equally good, he must be quite a treasure."

All men have their vanities. Clarence's was as much in his horse's excellences as his own; and, gratified even with the compliment of a stranger, he replied to it by joining in the praise, though with a modest and measured forbearance, which the stranger, if gifted with penetration, could easily have discerned, was more affected than sincere.

"And yet, sir," resumed Clarence's new companion, "my little palfrey might perhaps keep pace with your steed; look—I lay the rein on his neck—and, you see, he rivals—by heaven, he *outwalks* yours."

Not a little piqued and incensed, Linden also relaxed his rein, and urged his horse to a quicker step; but the lesser competitor not only sustained, but increased his superiority; and it was only by breaking into a trot that Linden's impatient and spirited steed could overtake him. Hitherto, Clarence had not honored his new companion with more than a rapid and slight glance; but rivalry, even in trifles, begets respect, and our defeated hero now examined him with a more curious eye.

The stranger was between forty and fifty—an age in which, generally, very little of the boy has survived the advance of manhood; yet was there a hearty and frank exhilaration in the manner and look of the person we describe which is rarely found beyond the first stage of youth. His features were comely and clearly cut, and his air and appearance indicative of a man who might equally have belonged to the middle or the upper orders. But Clarence's memory, as well as attention, was employed in his survey of the stranger; and he recognized, in a countenance on which time had passed very lightly, an old and oft-times recalled acquaintance. However, he did not immediately make himself known. "I will first see," thought he, "whether he can remember his young guest in the bronzed stranger, after eight years' absence."

"Well," said Clarence, as he approached the owner of the palfrey, who was laughing with childish glee at his conquest—"well, you have won, sir; but the tortoise might beat the hare in walking, and I content myself with thinking that at a trot or a gallop the result of a race would have been very different."

"I am not so sure of that, sir," said the sturdy stranger, patting the arched neck of his little favorite: "if you would like to try either, I should have no objection to venture a trifling wager on the event."

"You are very good," said Clarence, with a smile in which urbanity was a little mingled with contemptuous incredulity; "but I am not now at leisure to win your money: I have a long day's journey before me, and must not tire a faithful servant; yet I do candidly confess that I think" (and Clarence's recollection of the person he addressed made him introduce the quotation), "that my horse—

> Excels a common one
> In shape, in courage, color, *pace*, and bone."

"Eh, sir," cried our stranger, as his eyes sparkled at the verses: "I would own that your horse were worth all the horses in the kingdom, if you brought Will Shakspeare to prove it. And I am also willing to confess that your steed does fairly merit the splendid praise which follows the lines you have quoted—

Round hoofed, short jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eyes, small head, and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide."

"Come," said Clarence, "your memory has atoned for your horse's victory, and I quite forgive your conquest, in return for your compliment; but suffer me to ask how long you have commenced cavalier. The Arab's *tent* is, if I err, not more a badge of your profession than the Arab's *steed*."

King Cole (for the stranger was no less a person) looked at his companion in surprise. "So, you know me, then, sir! Well, it is a hard thing for a man to turn honest, when people have so much readier a recollection of his sins than his reform."

"Reform!" quoth Clarence, "am I then to understand that your majesty has abdicated your dominions under the greenwood tree?"

"You are," said Cole, eyeing his acquaintance inquisitively; "you are.

I fear no more the heat of the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
I my worldly task have done,
Home am gone and ta'en my wages."

"I congratulate you," said Clarence; "but only in part—for I have often envied your past state, and do not know enough of your present to say whether I should equally envy *that*."

"Why," answered Cole, "after all, we commit a great error in imagining that it is the living wood or the dead wall which makes happiness. 'My *mind* to me a kingdom is'—and it is that which you must envy, if you honor anything belonging to me with that feeling."

"The precept is both good and old," answered Clarence; "yet I think it was not a very favorite maxim of yours, some years ago. I remember a time when you thought no happiness could exist out of 'dingle and bosky dell.' If not very intrusive on your secrets, may I know how long you have changed your sentiments and manner of life? The reason of the change I dare not presume to ask."

"Certainly," said the quondam gipsy, musingly—"certainly I have seen your face before, and even the tone of your voice strikes me as not wholly unfamiliar; yet I cannot, for the life of me, guess whom I have the honor of addressing. However, sir, I have no hesitation in answering your questions. It was just five years ago, last summer, when I left the tents of Kedar. I now reside about a mile hence. It is but a hundred yards off the high road, and if you would not object to step aside and suffer a rasher, or aught else, to be 'the shoeing-horn to draw on a cup of ale,' as our plain forefathers were wont wittily to say, why, I shall be very happy to show you my habitation. You will have a double welcome, from the circumstance of *my* having been absent from home for the last three days."

Clarence, mindful of his journey, was about to decline the invitation, when a few heavy drops falling, began to fulfil the cloudy promise of the morning. "Trust," said Cole, "one who has been for years a watcher of the signs and menaces of the weather—we shall have a violent shower immediately. You have now no choice but to accompany me home."

"Well," said Clarence, yielding with a good grace, "I am glad of so good an excuse for intruding on your hospitality.

O, sky!
Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day
And make me travel forth without my cloak!"

"Bravo!" cried the ex-chief, too delighted to find a comrade so well acquainted with Shakspeare's sonnets, to heed the little injustice Clarence had done the sky, in accusing it of a treachery its black clouds had by no means deserved. "Bravo, sir; and *now*, my palfry against your steed—trot—eh—or gallop?"

"Trot, if it must be so," said Clarence, superciliously; "but I am a few paces before you."

"So much the better," cried the jovial chief. "Little John's mettle will be the more up—on with you, sir—he who breaks into a canter loses—on!"

And Clarence slightly touching his beautiful steed, the race was begun. At first his horse, which was a remarkable *stepper*, as the modern Messrs. Anderson and Dyson would say, greatly gained the advantage. "To the right," cried the *ci-devant* gipsy, as Linden had nearly passed a narrow lane which led to the domain of the ex-king. The turn gave "Little John" an opportunity which he seized to advantage; and, to Clarence's indignant surprise, he beheld Cole now close behind—now beside—and now—now—*before!* In the heat of the mo-

ment he put spurs rather too sharply to his horse, and the spirited animal immediately passed his competitor—*but*—in a canter!

"Victoria," cried Cole, keeping back his own steed—"Victoria—confess it!"

"Pshaw," said Clarence, petulantly.

"Nay, sir, never mind it," quoth the retired sovereign; "perhaps it was but a venial transgression of your horse—and on other ground I should not have beat you."

It is very easy to be generous when one is *quite* sure one is the victor. Clarence felt this, and, muttering out something about the sharp angle in the road, turned abruptly from all farther comment on the subject, by saying, "We are now, I suppose, entering your territory. Does not this white gate lead to your new (at least new to me) abode?"

"It does," replied Cole, opening the said gate, and pausing as if to suffer his guest and rival to look round and admire.

The house, in full view, was of red brick, small and square, faced with stone copings, and adorned in the centre with a gable roof, on which was a ball of glittering metal. A flight of stone steps led to the porch, which was of fair size and stately, considering the proportions of the mansion—over the door was a stone shield of arms, surmounted by a stag's head; and above this heraldic ornament was a window of great breadth, compared to the other conveniences of a similar nature. On either side of the house ran a slight iron fence, the protection of sundry plots of gay flowers and garden shrubs, while two peacocks were seen slowly stalking towards the enclosure to seek a shelter from the increasing shower. At the back of the building, thick trees and a rising hill gave a meet defence from the winds of winter; and in front, a sloping and small lawn afforded pasture for a few sheep, and two pet deer. Towards the end of this lawn were two large fishponds, shaded by rows of feathered trees. On the margin of each of these, as if emblematic of ancient customs, was a common tent; and in the intermediate space was a rustic pleasure-house, fenced from the encroaching cattle, and half hid by surrounding laurel, and the parasite ivy.

All together there was a quiet and old-fashioned comfort, and even luxury, about the place, which suited well with the eccentric character of the abdicated chief; and Clarence, as he gazed around, really felt that he might, perhaps, deem the last state of the owner *not* worse than the first.

Unmindful of the rain, which now began to pour fast and full, Cole suffered "Little John's" rein to fall over his neck, and the spoiled favorite to pluck the smooth grass beneath, while he pointed out to Clarence the various beauties of his seat.

"There, sir," said he, "by those ponds, in which, I assure you, old Isaac might have fished with delight, I pass many a summer's day. I was always a lover of the angle, and the farthest pool is the most beautiful bathing place imaginable;—as glorious Geoffrey Chaucer says—

> The gravel's gold; the water pure as glass,
> The bankès round the well environing;
> And softè as velvet the yonngè grass
> That thereupon lustily come springing.

"And in that arbor, Lucy—that is, my wife—sits in the summer evenings with her father and our children; and then—ah! see our pets come to welcome me"—pointing to the deer, who had advanced within a few yards of him, but, intimidated by the stranger, would not venture within reach—"Lucy loved choosing her favorites among animals which had formerly been wild, and faith I loved it too. But you observe the house, sir—it was built in the reign of Queen Anne: it belonged to my mother's family, but my father sold it, and his son five years ago rebought it. Those arms belong to my maternal ancestry. Look—look at the peacocks creeping along—poor pride theirs that can't stand the shower! But, egad, that reminds me of the rain. Come, sir, let us make for our shelter." And, resuming their progress, a minute more brought them to the old-fashioned porch. Cole's ring summoned a man, not decked in "livery gay," but, "clad in serving frock," who took the horses with a nod, half familiar, half respectful, at his master's injunctions of attention and hospitality to the stranger's beast; and then our old acquaintance, striking through a small low hall, ushered Clarence into the chief sitting-room of the mansion.

CHAPTER LXIV.

We are not poor; although we have
No roofs of cedar, nor our brave
Baiæ, nor keep
Account of such a flock of sheep,
Nor bullocks fed
To lard the shambles; barbles bred
To kiss our hands; nor do we wish
For Pollio's lampries in our dish.

If we can meet and so confer
Both by a shining salt-cellar,
And have our roof,
Although not arch'd, yet weather-proof:
And ceiling free
From that cheap candle-bawdery;
We'll eat our bean with that full mirth
As we were lords of all the earth.
—HERRICK, *from* HORACE.

ON entering the room, Clarence recognized Lucy, whom eight years had converted into a sleek and portly matron of about thirty-two, without stealing from her countenance its original expression of mingled modesty and good-nature. She hastened to meet her husband, with an eager and joyous air of welcome seldom seen on matrimonial faces after so many years of wedlock.

A fine, stout boy, of about eleven years old, left a cross-bow, which, on his father's entrance, he had appeared earnestly employed in mending, to share with his mother the salutations of the Returned. An old man sate in an arm-chair by the fire, gazing on the three with an affectionate and gladdening eye, and playfully detaining a child of about four years old, who was struggling to escape to dear "papa!"

The room was of oak wainscot, and the furniture plain, solid, and strong, and cast in the fashion still frequently found in those country houses which have remained unaltered by innovation since the days of George II.

Three rough-coated dogs, of a breed that would have puzzled a connoisseur, gave themselves the rousing shake, and, deserting the luxurious hearth, came in various welcome to their master. One rubbed himself against Cole's sturdy legs, murmuring soft rejoicings: he was the grandsire of the canine race, and his wick of life burnt low in the socket. Another sprung up almost to the face of his master, and yelled his very heart out with joy: that was the son, exulting in the vigor of matured *doghood!*—and the third scrambled and tumbled over the others, uttering his pæans in a shrill treble, and chiding most snappishly at his two progenitors for interfering with his pretensions to notice: that was the infant dog, the little reveller in puppy childishness! Clarence stood by the door, with his fine countenance smiling benevolently at the happiness he beheld, and congratulating himself that for one moment, the group had forgot that he was a stranger.

As soon as our gipsy friend had kissed his wife, shaken hands with his eldest hope, shaken his head at his youngest, smiled his salutation at the father-in-law, and patted into silence the canine claimants of his favor, he turned to Clarence, and saying, half bashfully, half good-humoredly, "See what a troublesome thing it is to return home, even after three days' absence. Lucy, dearest, welcome a new friend!" he placed a chair by the fireside for his guest, and motioned him to be seated.

The chief expression of Clarence's open and bold countenance was centred in the eyes and forehead; and as he now doffed his hat, which had hitherto concealed that expression, Lucy and her husband recognized him simultaneously.

"I am sure, sir," cried the former, "that I am glad to see you once more!"

"Ah! my young guest under the gipsy-awning!" exclaimed the latter, shaking him heartily by the hand: "where were my eyes, that they did not recognize you before?"

"Eight years," answered Clarence, "have worked more change with me and my friend here" (pointing to the boy, whom he had left last so mere a child), "than they have with you and his blooming mother. The wonder is, not that you did not remember me before, but that you remember me now!"

"You *are* altered, sir, certainly," said the frank chief. "Your face is thinner, and far graver: and the smooth cheeks of the boy (for, craving your pardon, you were little more then) are somewhat darkened by the bronzed complexion with which time honors the man."

And the good Cole sighed, as he contrasted Linden's ardent countenance and elastic figure, when he had last beheld him, with the serious and thoughtful face of the person now before him; yet did he inly own that years, if they had in some things deteriorated from, had in others improved, the effect of Clarence's appearance: they had brought decision to his mien, and

command to his brow, and had enlarged, to an ampler measure of dignity and power, the proportions of his form. Something too there was in his look, like that of a man who has stemmed fate, and won success; and the omen of future triumph, which our fortune-telling chief had drawn from his features, when first beheld, seemed already, in no small degree, to have been fulfilled.

Having seen her guest stationed in the seat of honor opposite her father, Lucy withdrew for a few moments, and when she re-appeared, was followed by a neat-handed sort of Phillis for a country-maiden, bearing such kind of "savory messes" as the house might be supposed to afford.

"At all events, mine host," said Clarence, "you did not desert the flesh-pots of Egypt when you forsook its tents."

"Nay," quoth the worthy Cole, seating himself at the table, "either under the roof or the awning, we may say, in the words of the old epilogue,*

> We can but bring you meat and set you stools,
> And to our best cheer say, You all are welcome.

We are plain people still; but if you can stay till dinner, you shall have a bottle of such wine as our fathers' honest souls would have rejoiced in."

"I am truly sorry that I cannot tarry with you, after so fair a promise," replied Clarence; "but before night I must be many miles hence."

Lucy came forward timidly. "Do you remember this ring, sir?" said she (presenting one), "you dropt it in my boy's frock, when we saw you last."

"I did so," answered Clarence. "I trust that he will not now disdain a stanger's offering—May it be as ominous of good luck to him as my night in your caravan has proved to me."

"I am heartily glad to hear that you have prospered," said Cole—"now, let us fall to."

* To the play of "All Fools," by Chapman.

CHAPTER LXV.

> Out of these convertites
> There is much matter to be heard and learned.
> —SHAKSPEARE.

"If you are bent upon leaving us so soon," said the honest Cole, as Clarence, refusing all farther solicitation to stay, seized the opportunity which the cessation of the rain afforded him, and rose to depart:—"if you are bent upon leaving us so soon, I will accompany you back again into the main road, as in duty bound."

"What, immediately on your return?" said Clarence—"no, no—not a step. What would my fair hostess say to me if I suffered it?"

"Rather what would she say to me if I neglected such a courtesy? Why, sir, when I meet one who knows Shakspeare's sonnets, to say nothing of the lights of the lesser stars, as well as you, only once in eight years, do you not think I would make the most of him? Besides, it is but a quarter of a mile to the road, and I love walking after a shower."

"I am afraid, Mrs. Cole," said Clarence, "that I must be selfish enough to accept the offer." And Mrs. Cole, blushing and smiling her assent and adieu, Clarence shook hands with the whole party, grandfather and child included, and took his departure.

As Cole was now a pedestrian, Linden threw the rein over his arm, and walked on foot by his host's side.

"So," said he, smiling, "I must not inquire into the reasons of your retirement?"

"On the contrary," replied Cole; "I have walked with you the more gladly from my desire of telling them to you, for we all love to seem consistent, even in our chimeras. About six years ago, I confess that I began to wax a little weary of my wandering life; my child, in growing up, required playmates; shall I own that I did not like him to find them among the children of my own comrades? The old scamps were good enough for me, but the young ones were a little too bad for my son. Between you and me only be it said, my juvenile hope was already a little corrupted. The dog Mim—you remember Mim, sir—secretly taught him to filch as well as if he had been a bantling of his own; and, faith, our smaller goods and chattels, especially of an edible nature, began to disappear, with a rapidity and

secresy that our itinerant palace could very ill sustain. Among us (*i. e.* gipsies) there is a law by which no member of the gang may steal from another; but my little heaven-instructed youth would by no means abide by that distinction; and so boldly designed and well executed were his rogueries that my paternal anxiety saw nothing before him but Botany Bay on the one hand, and Newgate Courtyard on the other."

"A sad prospect for the heir apparent!" quoth Clarence.

"It was so!" answered Cole, "and it made me deliberate. Then, as one gets older one's romance oozes out a little in rheums and catarrhs. I began to perceive that, though I had been bred, I had not been educated, as a gipsy; and, what was worse, Lucy, though she never complained, felt that the walls of our palace were not exempt from the damps of winter, nor our royal state from the Caliban curses of

> Cramps and
> Side stitches that do pen our breath up.

She fell ill; and during her illness I had sundry bright visions of warm rooms and coal fires, a friend, with whom I could converse upon Chaucer, and a tutor for my son, who would teach him other arts than those of picking pockets and pilfering larders. Nevertheless, I was a little ashamed of my own thoughts; and I do not know whether they would have been yet put into practice, but for a trifling circumstance which converted doubt and longing into certainty.

"Our crank cuffins had for some time looked upon me with suspicion and coldness: my superior privileges and comforts they had at first forgiven on account of my birth and my generosity to them; but by degrees they lost respect for the one and gratitude for the other; and as I had in a great measure ceased from participating in their adventures, or, during Lucy's illness, which lasted several months, joining in their festivities, they at length considered me as a drone in a hive, by no means compensating by my services as an ally for my admittance into their horde as a stranger. You will easily conceive, when this once became the state of their feelings towards me, with how ill a temper they brooked the lordship of my stately caravan, and my assumption of superior command. Above all, the women, who were very much incensed at Lucy's constant seclusion from their orgies, fanned the increasing discontent; and, at last, I verily believe that no eye-sore could have been more grievous to the Egyptians than my wooden habitation and the smoke of its single chimney.

"From ill-will, the rascals proceeded to ill-acts: and one dark night, when we were encamped on the very same ground as that which we occupied when we received you, three of them, Mim at their head, attacked me in mine own habitation. I verily believe, if they had mastered me, they would have robbed and murdered us all; except perhaps my son, whom they thought I ill-used, by depriving him of Mim's instructive society. Howbeit, I was still stirring when they invaded me, and by the help of the poker, and a tolerably strong arm, I repelled the assailants; but that very night, I passed from the land of Egypt, and made with all possible expedition to the nearest town, which was, as you may remember, W——.

"Here, the very next day, I learnt that the house I now inhabit was to be sold. It had (as I before said), belonged to my mother's family, and my father had sold it a little before his death. It was the home from which I had been stolen, and to which I had been returned: often in my star-lit wanderings had I flown to it in thought; and now it seemed as if Providence itself, in offering to my age the asylum I had above all others coveted for it, was interested in my retirement from the empire of an ungrateful people, and my atonement, in rest, for my past sins in migration.

"Well, sir, in short, I became the purchaser of the place you have just seen, and I now think that, after all, there is more happiness in reality than romance: like the laverock, here will I build my nest—

> Here give my weary spirit rest,
> And raise my low-pitched thoughts above
> Earth, or what poor mortals love."

"And your son," said Clarence, "has he reformed?"

"Oh, yes," answered Cole. "For my part, I believe the mind is less evil than people say it is; its great characteristic is imitation, and it will imitate the good as well as the bad, if we will set the example. I thank Heaven, sir,

that my boy now might go from Dan to Beersheba, and not filch a groat by the way."

"What do you intend him for?" said Clarence.

"Why, he loves adventure, and, faith, I can't break him of that, for I love it too, so I think I shall get him a commission in the army, in order to give him a fitting and legitimate sphere wherein to indulge his propensities."

"You could not do better," said Clarence. "But your fine sister, what says she to your amendment?"

"Oh! she wrote me a long letter of congratulation upon it; and every other summer, she is graciously pleased to pay me a visit of three months long; at which time, I observe, that poor Lucy is unusually smart and uncomfortable. We sit in the best room, and turn out the dogs; my father-in-law smokes his pipe in the arbor, instead of the drawing-room; and I receive sundry hints, all in vain, on the propriety of dressing for dinner. In return for these attentions on our part, my sister invariably brings my boy a present of a pair of white gloves, and my wife a French ribbon of the newest pattern; in the evening, instead of my reading Shakspeare, she tells us anecdotes of high life, and, when she goes away, she gives us, in return for our hospitality, a very general and very gingerly invitation to her house. Lucy sometimes talks to me about accepting it; but I turn a deaf ear to all such overtures, and so we continue much better friends than we should be if we saw more of each other."

"And how long has your father-in-law been with you?"

"Ever since we have been here. He gave up his farm, and cultivates mine for me; for I know nothing of those agricultural matters. I made his coming a little surprise, in order to please Lucy: you should have witnessed their meeting."

"I think I have now learned all particulars," said Clarence; "it only remains for me to congratulate you: but are you, in truth, never tired of the monotony and sameness of domestic life?"

"Yes!—and then I do, as I have just done—saddle Little John, and go on an excursion of three or four days, or even weeks, just as the whim seizes me: for I never return till I am driven back by the yearning for home, and the feeling that, after all one's wanderings, there is no place like it. Whether in private life, or public, sir, in parting with a little of one's liberty one gets a great deal of comfort in exchange."

"I thank you truly for your frankness," said Clarence: "it has solved many doubts with respect to you, that have often occurred to me. And now we are in the main road, and I must bid you farewell: we part, but our paths lead to the same object—you return to happiness, and I *seek* it."

"May *you* find it, and *I* not lose it, sir," said the wanderer reclaimed; and shaking hands, the pair parted.

CHAPTER LXVI.

Quicquid agit Rufus, nihil est, nisi Nævia Rufo,
Si gaudet, si flet, si tacet, hanc loquitur;
Cœnat, propinat, poscit, negat, annuit, una est
Nævia; si non sit Nævia, mutus erit.
Scriberet hesterna patri cum luce salutem
Nævia lux, inquit, Nævia numen, ave.*—MART.

"THE last time," said Clarence to himself, "that I travelled this road, on exactly the same errand that I travel now, I do remember that I was honored by the company of one, in all respects the opposite to mine honest host; for, whereas in the latter there is a luxuriant and wild eccentricity, an open and blunt simplicity, and a shrewd sense, which looks not after pence, but peace; so, in the mind of the friend of the late Lady Waddilove, there was a flat and hedged-in primness and narrowness of thought—an enclosure of bargains and profits of all species,—mustard-pots, rings, monkeys, chains, jars, and plum-colored velvet inexpressibles, his ideas, with the true alchemy of trade, turned them all into gold, yet was he also as shrewd and acute as he with whose character he contrasts—equally with him seeking comfort and gladness, and an asylum for his old age. Strange that all tempers should have a common object, and never a common road to it. But,

* "Whatever Rufus does is nothing, except Nævia be at his elbow. Be he joyful or sorrowful, be he even silent, he is still harping upon her. He eats, he drinks, he asks, he denies, he assents.—Nævia is his sole theme: no Nævia, and he's dumb. Yesterday at daybreak, he would fain write a letter of salutation to his father; 'Hail, Nævia, light of my eyes,' quoth he; 'hail, Nævia, my divine one.'"

since I have begun the contrast, let me hope that it may be extended in its omen unto me; let me hope that, as my encountering with the mercantile Brown brought me ill-luck in my enterprise, thereby signifying the crosses and vexations of those who labor in the cheateries and over-reachings which constitute the vocations of the world; so my meeting with the philosophical Cole, who has, both in vagrancy and rest, found cause to boast of happiness, authorities from his studies to favor his inclination to each, and reason to despise what he, with Sir Kenelm Digby, would wisely call—

The fading blossoms of the earth;

so my meeting with him may prove a token of good speed to mine errand, and thereby denote prosperity to one who seeks not riches, nor honor, nor the conquest of knaves, nor the good word of fools, but happy love, and the bourn of its quiet home.

Thus, half meditating, half moralizing, and drawing, like a true lover, an omen of fear or hope from occurrences in which plain reason could have perceived neither type nor token, Clarence continued, and concluded, his day's journey. He put up at the same little inn he had visited three years ago, and watched his opportunity of seeing Lady Flora alone. More fortunate in that respect, than he had been before, such opportunity the very next day presented to him.

CHAPTER LXVII.

Duke.—Sir Valentine!
Thur.—Yonder is Silvia, and Silvia's mine.
Val.—Thurio, give back.
—*The Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

I THINK, mamma," said Lady Flora to her mother, "that, as the morning is so beautiful, I will go into the pavilion to finish my drawing."

"But Lord Ulswater will be here in an hour, or perhaps less—may I tell him where you are, and suffer him to join you?"

"If you will accompany him," answered Lady Flora, coldly, as she took up her *portefeuille*, and withdrew.

Now the pavilion was a small summer-house of stone, situated in the most retired part of the grounds belonging to Westborough Park. It was a favorite retreat with Lady Flora, even in the winter months, for warm carpeting, a sheltered site, and a fire-place, constructed more for comfort than economy, made it scarcely less adapted to that season than to the more genial suns of summer.

The morning was so bright and mild that Lady Flora left open the door as she entered; she seated herself at the table, and, unmindful of her pretended employment, suffered the *portefeuille* to remain unopened. Leaning her cheek upon her hand, she gazed vacantly on the ground, and scarcely felt the tears which gathered slowly to her eyes, but, falling not, remained within the fair lids, chill and motionless, as if the thought which drew them there was born of a sorrow less agitated than fixed and silent.

The shadow of a man darkened the threshhold, and there paused.

Slowly did Flora raise her eyes, and the next moment Clarence Linden was by her side, and at her feet.

"Flora," said he, in a tone trembling with its own emotions—"Flora, have years indeed separated us for ever—or dare I hope that we have misconstrued each other's hearts, and that at this moment they yearn to be united with more than the fondness and fidelity of old?—Speak to me, Flora, one word."

But she had sunk on the chair overpowered, surprised, and almost insensible: and it was not for some moments that she could utter words rather wrung from, than dictated by, her thoughts.

"Cruel and insulting—for what have you come?—is it at such a time that you taunt me with the remembrance of my past folly, or your—your" (she paused for a moment, confused and hesitating, but presently recovering herself, rose, and added, in a calmer tone)—"Surely, you have no excuse for this intrusion—you will suffer me to leave you."

"No!" exclaimed Clarence, violently agitated—"no! Have you not wronged me, stung me, wounded me to the core by your injustice!—and will you not hear now how differently I have deserved from you!—On a bed of fever and pain I thought only of you; I rose from it animated by the hope of winning you! Though, during the danger of my wound, and my consequent illness, your parents

alone, of all my intimate acquaintances, neglected to honor with an inquiry the man whom you professed to consecrate with your regard, yet scarcely could my hand trace a single sentence before I wrote to you requesting an interview, in order to disclose my birth, and claim your plighted faith! That letter was returned to me unanswered, unopened. My friend and benefactor, whose fortune I now inherit, promised to call upon your father, and advocate my cause. Death anticipated his kindness. As soon as my sorrow for his loss permitted me, I came to this very spot! For three days I hovered about your house, seeking the meeting that you would fain deny me now. I could not any longer bear the torturing suspense I endured—I wrote to you—your father answered the letter. Here—here I have it still:—read!—note well the cool, the damning insult of each line! I see that you knew not of this: I rejoice at it! Can you wonder that, on receiving it, I subjected myself no more to such affronts? I hastened abroad. On my return I met you. Where? In crowds—in the glitter of midnight assemblies—in the whirl of what the vain call pleasure! I observed your countenance, your manner; was there in either a single token of endearing or regretful remembrance? None! I strove to harden my heart; I entered into politics, business, intrigue—I hoped, I longed, I burned to forget you, but in vain!

"At last I heard that Rumor, though it had long preceded, had not belied, the truth, and that you were to be married—married to Lord Ulswater! I will not say what I suffered or how idly I summoned pride to resist affection! But I would not have come now to molest you, Flora—to trouble your nuptial rejoicings with one thought of me, if, forgive me, I had not suddenly dreamt that I had cause to hope you had mistaken, not rejected, my heart; that—you turn away, Flora!—you blush!—you weep!—Oh, tell me, by one word, one look, that I was not deceived!"

"No, no, Clarence," said Flora, struggling with her tears; "it is too late, too late now! Why, why did I not know this before? I have promised, I am pledged?—in less than two months I shall be the wife of another!"

"Never," cried Clarence, "never! You promised on a false belief; they will not bind you to such a promise. Who is he that claims you? I am his equal in birth—in the world's name—and oh, by what worlds his superior in love! I will advance my claim to you in his very teeth—nay, I will not stir from these domains till you, your father, and my rival, have repaired my wrongs."

"Be it so, sir!"—cried a voice behind, and Clarence turned and beheld Lord Ulswater! His dark countenance was flushed with rage, which he in vain endeavored to conceal; and the smile of scorn that he strove to summon to his lip made a ghastly and unnatural contrast with the lowering of his brow, and the fire of his eyes—"Be it so, sir," he said, slowly advancing, and confronting Clarence. "You will dispute my claims to the hand Lady Flora Ardenne has long promised to one who, however unworthy of the gift, knows, at least, how to defend it. It is well; let us finish the dispute elsewhere. It is not the first time we shall have met, if not as rivals, as foes."

Clarence turned from him without reply, for he saw Lady Westborough had just entered the pavilion, and stood mute and transfixed at the door, with surprise, fear, and anger depicted upon her regal and beautiful countenance.

"It is to you, madam," said Clarence, approaching towards her, "that I venture to appeal. Your daughter and I, four long years ago, exchanged our vows; you flattered me with the hope that those vows were not displeasing to you; since then, a misunderstanding, deadly to my happiness and to her's, divided us. I come now to explain it. My birth may have seemed obscure; I come to clear it: my conduct doubtful; I come to vindicate it. I find Lord Ulswater my rival. I am willing to compare my pretensions to his. I acknowledge that he has titles which I have not,—that he has wealth, to which mine is but competence—but titles and wealth, as the means of happiness, are to be referred to your daughter, to none else. You have only, in an alliance with me, to consider my character and my lineage: the latter flows from blood as pure as that which warms the veins of my rival; the former stands already upon an eminence to which Lord Ulswater, in his loftiest visions, could never aspire. For the rest, madam, I adjure you, solemnly, as you value your peace of mind, your daughter's happiness, your freedom from the agonies of future remorse, and unavailing regret—I adjure you not to divorce those whom God, who speaks in the deep heart, and

the plighted vow, has already joined. This is a question in which your daughter's permanent woe or lasting happiness, from this present hour to the last sand of life, is concerned. It is to her that I refer it—let her be the judge."

And Clarence moved from Lady Westborough, who, agitated, confused, awed by the spell of a power and a nature of which she had not dreamed, stood pale and speechless, vainly endeavoring to reply—he moved from her towards Lady Flora, who leant, sobbing and convulsed with contending emotions, against the wall; but Lord Ulswater, whose fiery blood was boiling with passion, placed himself between Clarence and the unfortunate object of the contention.

"Touch her not, approach her not!" he said, with a fierce and menacing tone. "Till you have proved your pretensions superior to mine, unknown, presuming, and probably base-born, as you are, you will only pass over my body to your claims."

Clarence stood still for one moment, evidently striving to master the wrath which literally swelled his form beyond its ordinary proportions; and Lady Westborough, recovering herself in the brief pause, passed between the two, and, taking her daughter's arm, led her from the pavilion.

"Stay, madam, for one instant!" cried Clarence; and he caught hold of her robe.

Lady Westborough stood quite erect and still, and drawing her stately figure to its full height, said with that quiet dignity by which a woman so often stills the angrier passions of men, "I lay the prayer and command of a mother upon you, Lord Ulswater, and on you, sir, whatever be your real rank and name, not to make mine and my daughter's presence the scene of a contest which dishonors both. Still farther, if Lady Flora's hand and my approval be an object of desire to either, I make it a peremptory condition, with both of you, that a dispute already degrading to her name pass not from word to act. For you, Mr. Linden, if so I may call you, I promise that my daughter shall be left free and unbiassed to give that reply to your singular conduct which I doubt not her own dignity and sense will suggest!"

"By Heaven!" exclaimed Lord Ulswater, utterly beside himself with rage which, suppressed at the beginning of Lady Westborough's speech, had been kindled into double fury by its conclusion, "you will not suffer Lady Flora, no, nor any one but her affianced bridegroom, her only legitimate defender, to answer this arrogant intruder! You cannot think that her hand, the hand of my future wife, shall trace line or word to one who has so insulted her with his addresses and me with his rivalry."

"Man!" cried Clarence, abruptly, and seizing Lord Ulswater fiercely by the arm, "there are some causes which will draw fire from ice—beware—beware how you incense me to pollute my soul with the blood of a ——"

"What!" exclaimed Lord Ulswater.

Clarence bent down and whispered one word in his ear.

Had that word been the spell with which the sorcerers of old disarmed the fiend, it could not have wrought a greater change upon Lord Ulswater's mien and face. He staggered back several paces; the glow of his swarthy cheek faded into a death-like paleness; the word which passion had conjured to his tongue died there in silence; and he stood with eyes dilated and fixed on Clarence's face, on which their gazed seemed to force some unwilling certainty.

But Linden did not wait for him to recover his self-possession; he hurried after Lady Westborough, who, with her daughter, was hastening home.

"Pardon me, Lady Wesborough," he said (as he approached) with a tone and air of deep respect, "pardon me—but will you suffer me to hope that Lady Flora and yourself will, in a moment of greater calmness, consider over all I have said?—and—that she—that you, Lady Flora (added he, changing the object of his address), will vouchsafe one line of unprejudiced, unbiassed reply, to a love which, however misrepresented and calumniated, has in it, I dare to say, nothing that can disgrace her to whom, with an enduring constancy, and undimmed, though unhoping, ardor, it has been inviolably dedicated?"

Lady Flora, though she spoke not, lifted her eyes to his, and in that glance was a magic which made his heart burn with a sudden and flashing joy that atoned for the darkness of years.

"I assure you, sir," said Lady Westborough, touched, in spite of herself, with the sincerity and respect of Clarence's bearing, "that Lady Flora will reply to any letter of explanation or

proposal: for myself, I will not even see her answer. Where shall it be sent to you?"

"I have taken my lodgings at the inn, by your park gates. I shall remain there till—till——"

Clarence paused, for his heart was full; and, leaving the sentence to be concluded as his listeners pleased, he drew himself aside from their path, and suffered them to proceed.

As he was feeding his eyes with the last glimpse of their forms, ere a turn in the grounds snatched them from his view, he heard a rapid step behind, and Lord Ulswater, approaching, laid his hand upon Linden's shoulder, and said calmly,

"Are you furnished with proof to suppport the word you uttered?"

"I am!" replied Clarence, haughtily.

"And will you favor me with it?"

"At your leisure, my lord," rejoined Clarence.

"Enough!—Name your time, and I will attend you."

"On Tuesday:—I require till then to produce my witnesses."

"So be it—yet stay: on Tuesday I have military business at W——, some miles hence—the next day let it be—the place of meeting where you please."

"Here, then, my lord," answered Clarence; "you have insulted me grossly before Lady Westborough and your affianced bride, and before them my vindication and answer should be given."

"You are right," said Lord Ulswater: "be it here, at the hour of twelve." Clarence bowed his assent, and withdrew.

Lord Ulswater remained on the spot, with downcast eyes, and a brow on which thought had succeeded passion.

"If true," said he aloud, though unconsciously, "if this be true, why then I owe him reparation, and he shall have it at my hands. I owe it to him on my account, and that of one now no more. Till we meet, I will not again see Lady Flora; after that meeting, perhaps I may resign her for ever."

And with these words the young nobleman, who, despite of many evil and overbearing qualities, had, as we have said, his redeeming virtues, in which a capricious and unsteady generosity was one, walked slowly to the house—wrote a brief note to Lady Westborough, the purport of which the next chapter will disclose; and then, summoning his horse, flung himself on its back, and rode hastily away.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

We will examine if those accidents,
Which common fame call injuries, happen to him
Deservedly or no.—*The New Inn.*

FROM LORD ULSWATER TO LADY WESTBOROUGH.

"FORGIVE me, dearest Lady Westborough, for my violence—you know and will allow for the infirmities of my temper. I have to make you and Lady Flora one request, which I trust you will not refuse me.

"Do not see, or receive any communication from, Mr. Linden till Wednesday; and on that day, at the hour of twelve, suffer me to meet him at your house. I will then either prove him to be the basest of impostors, or, if I fail in this, and Lady Flora honors my rival with one sentiment of preference, I will, without a murmur, submit to her decree and my rejection. Dare I trust that this petition will be accorded to one who is, with great regard and esteem,

"Etc. etc. etc."

"This is fortunate," said Lady Westborough gently to her daughter, who, leaning her head on her mother's bosom, suffered hopes, the sweeter for their long sleep, to divide, if not wholly to possess, her heart. "We shall have now time, well and carefully to reflect over what will be best for your future happiness. We owe this delay to one to whom you have been affianced. Let us, therefore, merely write to Mr. Linden, to inform him of Lord Ulswater's request; and to say that if he will meet his lordship at the time appointed, we, that is *I*, shall be happy to see him."

Lady Flora sighed, but she saw the reasonableness of her mother's proposal, and, pressing Lady Westborough's hand, murmured her assent.

"At all events," thought Lady Westborough, as she wrote to Clarence, "the affair can but terminate to advantage. If Lord Ulswater proves Mr. Linden's unworthiness, the suit of the latter is, of course, at rest for ever: if not, and Mr. Linden be indeed all that he asserts, my daughter's choice cannot be an election of reproach; Lord Ulswater promises peaceably to withdraw his pretensions; and though Mr. Linden may not possess his rank or fortune, he is certainly one with whom, if of ancient blood, any family would be proud of an alliance."

Blending with these reflections a considerable share of curiosity and interest in a secret which partook so strongly of romance, Lady Westborough despatched her note to Clarence. The answer returned was brief, respectful, and not only acquiescent in, but grateful for, the proposal.

With this arrangement both Lady Westborough and Lady Flora were compelled, though with very different feelings, to be satisfied; and an agreement was established between them, to the effect that if Linden's name passed unblemished through the appointed ordeal, Lady Flora was to be left to, and favored in, her own election; while, on the contrary, if Lord Ulswater succeeded in the proof he had spoken of, his former footing in the family was to be fully re-established, and our unfortunate adventurer for ever discarded.

To this Lady Flora readily consented; for with a sanguine and certain trust in her lover's truth and honor, which was tenfold more strong for her late suspicions, she would not allow herself a doubt as to the result; and with an impatience, mingled with a rapturous exhilaration of spirit, which brought back to her the freshness and radiancy of her youngest years, she counted the hours and moments to the destined day.

While such was the state of affairs at Westborough Park, Clarence was again on horseback, and on another excursion. By the noon of the day following that which had seen his eventful meeting with Lady Flora, he found himself approaching the extreme boundaries of the county in which Mordaunt Court, and the memorable town of W——, were situated. The characteristics of the country were now materially changed from those which gave to the vicinity of Algernon's domains its wild and uncultivated aspect.

As Clarence slowly descended a hill of considerable steepness and length, a prospect of singular and luxurious beauty opened to his view. The noblest of England's rivers was seen through "turfs and shades and flowers," pursuing "its silver-winding way." On the opposite banks lay, embosomed in the golden glades of autumn, tbe busy and populous town that from the height seemed still and lifeless as an enchanted city, over which the mid-day sun hung like a guardian spirit. Behind, in sweeping diversity, stretched wood and dale, and fields despoiled of their rich harvest, yet still presenting a yellow surface to the eye; and ever and anon some bright patch of green, demanding the gaze as if by a lingering spell from the past spring; while, here and there, spire and hamlet studded the landscape, or some lowly cot lay, backed by the rising ground or the silent woods, white and solitary, and sending up its faint tribute of smoke in spires to the altars of Heaven. The river was more pregnant of life than its banks: barge and boat were gliding gaily down the wave, and the glad oar of the frequent and slender vessels consecrated to pleasure was seen dimpling the water, made by distance smoother than glass.

On the right side of Clarence's road, as he descended the hill, lay wide plantations of fir and oak, divided from the road by a park paling, the uneven sides ot which were covered with brown moss, and which, at rare openings in the young wood, gave glimpses of a park, seemingly extending over great space, the theatre of many a stately copse and oaken grove, which might have served the Druids with fane and temple meet for the savage sublimity of their worship.

Upon these unfrequent views, Clarence checked his horse, and gazed, with emotions sweet yet bitter, over the pales, along the green expanse which they contained. And once, when through the trees he caught a slight glimpse of the white walls of the mansion they adorned, all the years of his childhood seemed to rise on his heart, thrilling to its farthest depths with a mighty and sorrowful, yet sweet, melody, and

Singing of boyhood back—the voices of his home.

Home! yes, amidst those groves had the April of his life lavished its mingled smiles and tears! There was the spot hallowed by his earliest joys! and the scene of sorrows still more sacred than joys!—and now, after many years, the exiled boy came back, a prosperous and thoughtful man, to take but one brief glance of that home which to him had been less hospitable than a stranger's dwelling, and to find a witness, among those who remembered him, of his very birth and identity!

He wound the ascent at last, and entering a small town at the foot of the hill, which was

exactly facing the larger one on the opposite shore of the river, put up his horse at one of the inns: and then, with a beating heart, remounted the hill, and, entering the park by one of its lodges, found himself once more in the haunts of his childhood.

CHAPTER LXIX.

Oh, the steward, the steward—I might have guessed as much.—*Tales of the Crusaders.*

The evening was already beginning to close, and Clarence was yet wandering in the park, and retracing, with his heart's eye, each knoll, and tree, and tuft, once so familiar to his wanderings.

At the time we shall again bring him personally before the reader, he was leaning against an iron fence that, running along the left wing of the house, separated the pleasure-grounds from the park, and gazing, with folded arms and wistful eyes, upon the scene on which the dusk of twilight was gradually gathering.

The house was built originally in the reign of Charles II.: it had since received alteration and additions, and now presented to the eye a vast pile of Grecian, or rather Italian, architecture, heterogeneously blended with the massive window, the stiff coping, and the heavy roof which the age immediately following the Revolution introduced. The extent of the building, and the grandeur of the circling demesnes, were sufficient to render the mansion imposing in effect; while, perhaps, the style of the architecture was calculated to conjoin a stately comfort with magnificence, and to atone in solidity for any deficiency in grace. At a little distance from the house, and placed on a much more commanding site, were some ancient and ivy-grown ruins, now scanty indeed, and fast mouldering into decay, but sufficient to show the antiquarian the remains of what once had been a hold of no ordinary size and power. These were the wrecks of the old mansion, which was recorded by tradition to have been reduced to this state by accidental fire, during the banishment of its loyal owner in the time of the Protectorate. Upon his return, the present house was erected.

As Clarence was thus stationed, he perceived an elderly man approach towards him. "This is fortunate," said he to himself—"the very person I have been watching for. Well, years have passed lightly over old Wardour: still the same precise garb—the same sturdy and slow step—the same upright form."

The person thus designated now drew near enough for parlance; and, in a tone a little authoritative, though very respectful, inquired if Clarence had any business to transact with him.

"I beg pardon," said Clarence, slouching his hat over his face, "for lingering so near the house at this hour: but I have seen it many years ago, and indeed, been a guest within its walls; and it is rather my interest for an old friend, than my curiosity to examine a new one, which you are to blame for my trespass."

"Oh, sir," answered Mr. Wardour, a short and rather stout man, of about sixty-four, attired in a chocolate coat, gray breeches, and silk stockings of the same dye, which, by the waning light, took a sombrer and sadder hue —"Oh, sir—pray make no apology. I am only sorry the hour is so late, that I cannot offer to show you the interior of the house: perhaps, if you are staying in the neighborhood, you would like to see it to-morrow. You were here, I take it, sir, in my old lord's time?"

"I was!—upon a visit to his second son—we had been boys together."

"What! Master Clinton?" cried the old man, with extreme animation; and then suddenly changing his voice, added, in a subdued, and saddened tone, "Ah! poor young gentleman, I wonder where he is now?"

"Why—is he not in this country?" asked Clarence.

"Yes—no—that is, I can't exactly say where he is—I wish I could—poor master Clinton—I loved him as my own son."

"You surprise me," said Clarence. "Is there anything in the fate of Clinton L'Estrange that calls forth your pity! If so, you would gratify a much better felling than curiosity if you would inform me of it. The fact is, that I came here to seek him; for I have been absent from the country many years, and on my return, my first inquiry was for my old friend and schoolfellow. None knew anything of him in London, and I imagined, therefore, that

he might have settled down into a country gentleman. I was fully prepared to find him marshalling the fox-hounds or beating the preserves; and you may consequently imagine my mortification on learning, at my inn, that he had not been residing here for many years; further I know not!"

"Ay—ay—sir," said the old steward, who had listened very attentively to Clarence's detail, "had you pressed one of the village gossips a little closer, you would doubtless have learned more! But 'tis a story I don't much love telling, although formerly I could have talked of Master Clinton by the hour together, to any one who would have had the patience to listen to me."

"You have really created in me a very painful desire to learn more," said Clarence; "and if I am not intruding on any family secrets, you would oblige me greatly by whatever information you may think proper to afford to an early and attached friend of the person in question."

"Well, sir, well," replied Mr. Wardour, who, without imputation on his discretion, loved talking as well as any other old gentleman of sixty-four, "if you will condescend to step up to my house, I shall feel happy and proud to converse with a friend of my dear young master's; and you are heartily welcome to the information I can give you."

"I thank you sincerely," said Clarence; "but suffer me to propose, as an amendment to your offer, that you accompany me for an hour or two to my inn."

"Nay, sir," answered the old gentleman, in a piqued tone, "I trust you will not disdain to honor me with your company. Thank Heaven, I can afford to be hospitable now and then."

Clarence, who seemed to have his own reasons for the amendment he had proposed, still struggled against this offer, but was at last, from fear of offending the honest steward, obliged to accede.

Striking across a path, which led through a corner of the plantation, to a space of ground containing a small garden, quaintly trimmed in the Dutch taste, and a brick house of moderate dimensions, half overgrown with ivy and jessamine, Clarence and his invitor paused at the door of the said mansion, and the latter welcomed his guest to his abode.

"Pardon me," said Clarence, as a damsel in waiting opened the door, "but a very severe attack of rheumatism obliges me to keep on my hat; you will, I hope, indulge me in my rudeness."

"To be sure—to be sure, sir. I myself suffer terribly from rheumatism in the winter—though you look young, sir, very young, to have an old man's complaint. Ah, the people of my day were more careful of themselves, and that is the reason we are such stout fellows in our age."

And the worthy steward looked complacently down at legs, which very substantially filled their comely investments.

"True, sir," said Clarence, laying his hand upon that of the steward, who was just about to open the door of an apartment; "but suffer me at least to request you not to introduce me to any of the ladies of your family. I could not, were my very life at stake, think of affronting them by not doffing my hat. I have the keenest sense of what is due to the sex, and I must seriously entreat you, for the sake of my health, during the whole of the coming winter, to suffer our conversation not to take place in their presence."

"Sir—I honor your politeness," said the prim little steward: "I, myself, like every true Briton, reverence the ladies; we will, therefore, retire to my study. Mary, girl," turning to the attendant, "see that we have a nice chop for supper, in half an hour; and tell your mistress that I have a gentleman of quality with me upon particular business, and must not be disturbed."

With these injunctions, the steward led the way to the farther end of the house, and, having ushered his guest into a small parlor, adorned with sundry law-books, a great map of the estate, a print of the late owner of it, a rusty gun, slung over the fire-place, two stuffed pheasants, and a little mahogany buffet—having, we say, led Clarence to this sanctuary of retiring stewardship, he placed a seat for him and said—

"Between you and me, sir, be it respectfully said, I am not sorry that our little confabulation should pass alone. Ladies are very delightful—very delightful, certainly; but they won't let one tell a story one's own way—they are fidgetty, you know, sir—fidgetty—nothing more; 'tis a trifle, but it is unpleasant; besides, my wife was Master Clinton's foster-mother, and

she can't hear a word about him, without running on into a long rig-marole of what he did as a baby, and so forth. I like people to be chatty, sir, but not garrulous; I can't bear garrulity—at least in a female. But suppose, sir, we defer our story till after supper? A glass of wine or warm punch makes talk glide more easily; besides, sir, I want something to comfort me when I talk about Master Clinton. Poor gentleman, he was so comely, so handsome!"

"Did you think so?" said Clarence, turning towards the fire.

"Think so!" ejaculated the steward, almost angrily; and forthwith he launched out into an encomium on the perfections, personal, moral, and mental, of Master Clinton, which lasted till the gentle Mary entered to lay the cloth. This reminded the old steward of the glass of wine which was so efficacious in making talk glide easily; and, going to the buffet before mentioned, he drew forth two bottles, both of port. Having carefully and warily decanted both, he changed the subject of his praise; and, assuring Clarence that the wine he was about to taste was, at least, as old as Master Clinton, having been purchased in joyous celebration of the young gentleman's birth-day, he whiled away the minutes with a glowing eulogy on its generous qualities, till Mary entered with the supper.

Clarence, with an appetite sharpened, despite his romance, by a long fast, did ample justice to the fare; and the old steward, warming into familiarity with the virtues of the far-famed port, chatted and laughed in a strain half simple and half shrewd.

The fire being stirred up to a free blaze, the hearth swept, and all the tokens of supper, save and except the kingly bottle and its subject glasses, being removed, the steward and his guest drew closer to each other, and the former began his story.

CHAPTER LXX.

The actors are at hand, and by their shew,
You shall know all that you are like to know.
—*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

"You know, probably, sir, that my late lord was twice married: by his first wife he had three children, only one of whom, the youngest, though now the present earl, survived the first period of infancy. When Master Francis, as we always called him, in spite of his accession to the title of viscount, was about six years old, my lady died, and, a year afterwards, my lord married again. His second wife was uncommonly handsome: she was a Miss Talbot (a Catholic), daughter of Colonel Talbot, and niece to the celebrated beau, Squire Talbot, of Scarsdale Park. Poor lady! they say that she married my lord through a momentary pique against a former lover. However that may be, she was a fine, high-spirited creature—very violent in temper, to be sure, but generous and kind when her passion was over; and however haughty to her equals, charitable and compassionate to the poor.

"She had but one son, Master Clinton. Never, sir, shall I forget the rejoicings that were made at his birth; for my lord doted on his second wife, and had disliked his first, whom he had married for her fortune; and it was therefore natural that he should prefer the child of the present wife to Master Francis. Ah, it is sad to think how love can change! Well, sir, my lord seemed literally to be wrapt up in the infant: he nursed it, and fondled it, and hung over it, as if he had been its mother rather than its father. My lady desired that it might be christened by one of her family names; and my lord consenting, it was called Clinton.—(The wine is with you, sir! Do observe that it has not changed color in the least, notwithstanding its age!)

"My lord was fond of a quiet, retired life; indeed, he was a great scholar, and spent the chief part of his time among his books. Dr. Latinas, the young gentleman's tutor, said his lordship made Greek verses better than Dr. Latinas could make English ones, so you may judge of his learning. But my lady went constantly to town, and was among the gayest of the gay; nor did she often come down here without bringing a whole troop of guests. Lord help us, what goings on there used to be at the great house!—such dancing and music, and dining, and supping, and shooting-parties, fishing-parties, gipsy-parties; you would have thought all England was merry-making there.

"But my lord, though he indulged my lady in all her whims and extravagance, seldom took much share in them himself. He was con-

stantly occupied with his library and children, nor did he ever suffer either Master Francis or Master Clinton to mix with the guests. He kept them very close at their studies, and when the latter was six years old, I do assure you, sir, he could say his *Propria quæ maribus* better than I can.—(You don't drink, sir.) When Master Francis was sixteen, and Master Clinton eight, the former was sent abroad on his travels with a German tutor, and did not return to England for many years afterwards; meanwhile Master Clinton grew up to the age of fourteen, increasing in comeliness and goodness. He was very fond of his studies, much more so than Master Francis had been, and was astonishingly forward for his years. So my lord loved him better and better, and would scarcely ever suffer him to be out of his sight.

"When Master Clinton was about the age I mentioned, viz., fourteen, a gentleman of the name of Sir Clinton Manners, became a constant visitor at the house. Report said that he was always about my lady in London at Ranelagh, and the ball-rooms and routs, and all the fine places—and certainly he was scarcely ever from her side in the pleasure parties at the park. But my lady said that he was a cousin of her's, and an old playmate in childhood, and so he was—and unhappily for her, something more too. My lord, however, shut up in his library, did not pay any attention to my lady's intimacy with Sir Clinton; on the contrary, as he was a cousin and friend of her's, his lordship seemed always happy to see him, and was the only person in the neighborhood who had no suspicion of what was going on.

"Oh, sir, it is a melancholy story, and I can scarcely persuade myself to tell it. (It is really delicious wine this—six-and-twenty years old last *birth-day*—to say nothing of its age before I bought it—Ah !)—Well, sir, the blow came at last like a thunder-clap—my lady, finding disguise was in vain, went off with Sir Clinton. Letters were discovered which showed that they had corresponded for years—that he was her lover before marriage—that she, in a momentary passion with him, had accepted my lord's offer—that she had always repented her precipitation—and that she had called her son after his name—all this, and much more, sir, did my lord learn, as it were, at a single blow.

"He obtained a divorce, and Sir Clinton and my lady went abroad. But from that time my lord was never the same man. Always proud and gloomy, he now became intolerably violent and morose. He shut himself up, saw no company of any description, rarely left the house, and never the park—and, from being one of the gayest places in the country, sir, the mansion became as dreary and deserted as if it had been haunted. (It is for you to begin the second bottle, sir.)

"But the most extraordinary change in my lord was in his conduct to Master Clinton—from doating upon him, to a degree that would have spoilt any temper less sweet than my poor young master's, he took the most violent aversion to him. From the circumstance of his name, and the long intimacy existing between my lady and her lover, his lordship would not believe that Master Clinton was his own child; and indeed I must confess there seemed good ground for his suspicions. Besides this, Master Clinton took very much after his mother. He had her eyes, hair, and beautiful features, so that my lord could never see him without being reminded of his disgrace: therefore whenever the poor young gentleman came into his presence, he would drive him out, with oaths and threats which rung through the whole house. He could not even bear that he should have any attendance or respect from the servants, for he considered him quite as an alien like, and worse than a stranger; and his lordship's only delight seemed to consist in putting upon him every possible indignity and affront. But Master Clinton was a high spirited young gentleman, and after having in vain endeavored to soothe my lord by compliance and respect, he at last utterly avoided his lordship's presence.

"He gave up his studies in a great measure, and wandered about the park and woods all day, and sometimes even half the night; his mother's conduct, and his father's unkindness seemed to prey upon his health and mind, and, at last, he grew almost as much altered as my lord. From being one of the merriest boys possible, full of life and spirits, he became thoughtful and downcast, his step lost its lightness, and his eye all the fire which used once quite to warm one's heart when one looked at it; in short, sir, the sins of the mother were visited as much upon the child as the husband.

(Not the least tawney, sir, you see, though it is so old !)

"My lord at first seemed to be glad that he now never saw his son; but, by degrees, I think, he missed the pleasure of venting his spleen upon him; and so he ordered my young master not to stir out without his leave, and confined him closer than ever to his studies. Well, sir, (if it were not for this port I could not get out another sentence—!) there used then to be bad scenes between them: my lord was a terrlbly passionate man, and said things sharper than a two-edged sword, as the psalms express it; and though Master Clinton was one of the mildest and best tempered boys imaginable, yet he could not at all times curb his spirit; and, to my mind, when a man is perpetually declaring he is not your father, one may now and then be forgiven in forgetting that you are to behave as his son.

"Things went on in this way sadly enough for about three years and a half, when Master Clinton was nearly eighteen. One evening, after my lord had been unusually stormy, Master Clinton's spirit warmed, I suppose, and, from word to word, the dispute increased, till my lord, in a furious rage, ordered in the servants, and told them to horsewhip his son. Imagine, sir, what a disgrace to that noble house! But there was not one of them who would not rather have cut off his right hand than laid a finger upon Master Clinton, so greatly was he beloved; and, at last, my lord summoned his own gentleman, a German, six feet high, entirely devoted to his lordship, and commanded him, upon pain of instant dismissal, to make use, in his presence, of a horsewhip which he put into his hand.

"The German did not dare refuse, so he approached Master Clinton. The servants were still in the room, and perhaps they would have been bold enough to rescue Master Clinton, had there been any need of their assistance; but he was a tall youth, as bold as a hero, and, when the German approached, he caught him by the throat, threw him down, and very nearly strangled him: he then, while my lord was speechless with rage, left the room, and did not return all night. (What a body it has, sir—Ah !)

"The next morning I was in a little room adjoining my lord's study, looking over some papers and maps. His lordship did not know of my presence, but was sitting alone at breakfast, when Master Clinton suddenly entered the study; the door leading to my room was ajar, and I heard all the conversation that ensued.

"My lord asked him very angrily how he had dared absent himself all night: but Master Clinton making no reply to this question, said, in a very calm, loud voice, which I think I hear now,—'My lord, after the insult you have offered to me, it is perhaps unnecessary to observe that nothing could induce me to remain under your roof. I come, therefore, to take my last leave of you."

"He paused, and my lord (probably, like me, being taken by surprise) making no reply, he continued. 'You have often told me, my lord, that I am not your son; if this be possible, so much the more must you rejoice at the idea of ridding your presence of an intruder.' 'And how, sir, do you expect to live, except upon my bounty?' exclaimed my lord. 'You remember,' answered my young master, 'that a humble dependent of my mother's family, who had been our governess in childhood, left me, at her death, the earnings of her life. I believe they amount to nearly a thousand pounds—I look to your lordship's honor either for the principal or the yearly interest, as may please you best: farther I ask not from you.' 'And do you think, sir,' cried my lord, almost screaming with passion, 'that upon that beggarly pittance you shall go forth to dishonor, more than it is yet dishonored, the name of my ancient house? Do you think, sir, that that name to which you have no pretension, though the law iniquitously grants it you, shall be sullied either with trade or robbery? for to one or the other you must necessarily be driven.' 'I foresaw your speech, my lord, and am prepared with an answer. Far be it from me to thrust myself into any family, the head of which thinks proper to reject me—far be it from me to honor my humble fortunes with a name which I am as willing as yourself to disown: I purpose, therefore, to adopt a new one; and whatever may be my future fate, that name will screen me both from your remembrance and the world's knowledge. Are you satisfied now, my lord?'

"His lordship did not answer for some minutes; at last, he said sneeringly, 'Go, boy, go! I am delighted to hear you have decided so

well. Leave word with my steward where you wish your clothes to be sent to you: Heaven forbid I should rob you either of your wardrobe or your princely fortune. Wardour will transmit to you the latter, even to the last penny, by the same conveyance as that which is honored by the former. And now good morning, sir; yet stay, and mark my words—never dare to re-enter my house, or to expect an iota more of fortune or favor from me. And, hark you, sir—if you dare violate your word, if you dare, during my life, at least, assume a name which you were born to sully, my curse, my deepest, heartiest, eternal curse, be upon your head in this world and the next!' 'Fear not, my lord, my word is pledged,' said the young gentleman; and the next moment I heard his parting step in the hall.

"Sir, my heart was full, (your glass is empty!) and my head spun round as if I were on a precipice: but I was determined my young master should not go till I had caught another glimpse of his dear face, so I gently left the room I was in, and hastening out of the house by a private entrance, met Master Clinton in the park, not very far from the spot where I saw you, sir, just now. To my surprise, there was no sign of grief or agitation upon his countenance: I had never seen him look so proud, or, for years, so happy.

"'Wardour,' said he, in a gay tone, when he saw me, 'I was going to your house: my father has at last resolved that I should, like my brother, commence my travels, and I wish to leave with you the address of the place to which my clothes, etc., will be sent.'

"I could not contain any longer when I heard this, sir; I burst into tears, confessed that I had accidentally heard his conversation with my lord, and besought him not to depart so hastily, and with so small a fortune; but he shook his head, and would not hear me. 'Believe me, my good Wardour,' said he, 'that since my unhappy mother's flight, I have never felt so elated or so happy as I do now: one should go through what I have done, to learn the rapture of independence.' He then told me to have his luggage sent to him, under his initials of C. L., at the Golden Fleece, the principal inn in the town of W——, which, you know, sir, is at the other end of the county, on the road to London; and then, kindly shaking me by the hand, he broke away from me; but he turned back before he had got three paces, and said (and then, for the first time, the pride of his countenance fell, and the tears stood in his eyes), 'Wardour, do not divulge what you have heard: put as good a face upon my departure as you can, and let the blame, if any, fall upon me, not upon your lord: after all, he is to be pitied, not blamed, and I can never forget that he once loved me.' He did not wait for my answer, perhaps he did not like to show me how much he was affected, but hurried down the park, and I soon lost sight of him. My lord that very morning sent for me, demanded what address his son had left, and gave me a letter, enclosing, I suppose, a bill for my poor young master's fortune, ordering it to be sent with the clothes immediately.

"Sir, I have never seen or heard aught of the dear gentleman since: you must forgive me, I cannot help tears, sir—(the wine is with you)."

"But the mother, the mother!" said Clarence, earnestly, "what became of her? she died abroad, two years since, did she not?"

"She did, sir," answered the honest steward, refilling his glass. "They say that she lived very unhappily with Sir Clinton, who did not marry her; till all of a sudden she disappeared, none knew whither."

Clarence redoubled his attention.

"At last," resumed the steward, "two years ago, a letter came from her to my lord; she was a nun in some convent (in Italy, I think), to which she had, at the time of her disappearance, secretly retired. The letter was written on her death-bed, and so affectingly, I suppose, that even my stern lord was in tears for several days after he received it. But the principal passage in it was relative to her son: it assured my lord (for so with his own lips he told me just before he died, some months ago), that Master Clinton was in truth his son, and that it was not till she had been tempted many years after her marriage, that she had fallen; she implored my lord to believe this 'on the word of one for whom earth and earth's objects were no more;' those were her words.

"Six months ago, when my lord lay on the bed from which he never rose, he called me to him, and said—'Wardour, you have always been the faithful servant of our house, and warmly attached to my second son; tell my poor boy, if ever you see him, that I did at

last open my eyes to my error, and acknowledge him as my child; tell him that I have desired his brother (who was then, sir, kneeling by my lord's side), as he values my blessing, to seek him out and repair the wrong I have done him; and add, that my best comfort in death was the hope of his forgiveness.'"

"Did he, did he say *that?*" exclaimed Clarence, who had been violently agitated during the latter part of this recital, and now sprung from his seat—"My father, my father! would that I had borne with thee more!—mine—mine was the fault—from *thee* should have come the forgiveness!"

The old steward sate silent and aghast. At that instant his wife entered, with a message of chiding at the lateness of the hour upon her lip, but she started back, when she saw Clarence's profile, as he stood leaning against the wall: "Good Heavens!" cried she, "is it, is it—yes, it is my young master, my own foster-son!"

Rightly had Clarence conjectured, when he had shunned her presence. Years had, indeed, wrought a change in his figure and face: acquaintance, servant, friend, relation,—the remembrance of his features had passed from all; but she who had nursed him as an infant on her lap, and fed him from her breast, she who had joined the devotion of clanship to the fondness of a mother, knew him at a glance.

"Yes," cried he, as he threw himself into her whithered and aged arms, "it is I, the child *you* reared, come, after many years, to find too late, when a father is no more, that he had a right to a father's home."

CHAPTER LXXI.

Let us go in,
And charge us there upon interrogatories.
—SHAKSPEARE.

"BUT did not any one recognize you in your change of name?" said the old foster mother, looking fondly upon Clarence, as he sate the next morning by her side. "How could any one forget so winsome a face who had once seen it?"

"You don't remember," said Clarence (as we will yet continue to call our hero), smiling, "that your husband had forgotten it."

"Ay, sir," cried the piqued steward, "but that was because you wore your hat slouched over your eyes; if you had taken off *that*, I should have known you directly."

"However that may be," said Clarence, unwilling to dwell longer on an occurrence which he saw hurt the feelings of the kind Mr. Wardor, "it is very easy to explain how I preserved my incognito. You recollect that my father never suffered me to mix with my mother's guests: so that I had no chance of their remembering me, especially as, during the last three years and a half, no stranger had ever entered our walls. Add to this, that I was in the very time of life in which a few years work the greatest change, and on going to London, I was thrown entirely among people who could never have seen me before. Fortunately for me, I became acquainted with my mother's uncle—circumstances subsequently led me to disclose my birth to him, upon a promise that he would never call me by any other name than that which I had assumed. He, who was the best, the kindest, the most generous of human beings, took a liking to me. He insisted not only upon his relationship to me, as my grand uncle, but upon the justice of repairing to me the wrongs his unhappy niece had caused me. The delicacy of his kindness—the ties of blood—and an accident which had enabled me to be of some service to him, all prevented my resisting the weight of obligation with which he afterwards oppressed me. He procured me an appointment abroad: I remained there four years. When I returned, I entered, it is true, into very general society; but four years had, as you may perceive, altered me greatly; and even had there previously existed any chance of my being recognized, that alteration would, probably, have been sufficient to ensure my secret."

"But your brother—my present lord—did you never meet me, sir?"

"Often, my good mother; but you remember that I was little more than six years old, when he left England, and when he next saw me, I was about two-and-twenty: it would have been next to a miracle; or, at least, would have required the eyes of love like yours to have recalled me to memory after such an absence.

"Well!—to return to my story—I succeeded partly as his nearest relation, but principally from an affection dearer than blood, to the for-

tune of my grand uncle, Mr. Talbot. Fate prospered with me: I rose in the world's esteem and honor, and soon became prouder of my borrowed appellation than of all the titles of my lordly line. Circumstances occurring within the last week, which it will be needless to relate, but which may have the greatest influence over my future life, made it necessary to do what I had once resolved I would never do—prove my identity and origin. Accordingly I came here to seek you."

"But why did not my honored young master disclose himself last night?" asked the steward.

"I might say," answered Clarence, "because I anticipated great pleasure in a surprise; but I had another reason—it was this: I had heard of my poor father's death, and I was painfully anxious, to learn if at the last he had testified any relenting towards me—and yet more so to ascertain the manner of my unfortunate mother's fate. Both abroad and in England, I had sought tidings of her everywhere, but in vain: in mentioning my mother's retiring into a convent, you have explained the reason why my efforts were so fruitless. With these two objects in view, I thought myself more likely to learn the whole truth as a stranger than in my proper person; for in the latter case I deemed it probable that your delicacy and kindness might tempt you to conceal whatever was calculated to wound my feelings, and to exaggerate anything that might tend to flatter or to soothe them. Thank Heaven, I now learn that I have a right to the name my boyhood bore, that my birth is not branded with the foulest of private crimes, and that in death my father's heart yearned to his too hasty but repentant son. Enough of this—I have now only to request you, my friend, to accompany me, before day-break, on Wednesday morning, to a place several miles hence. Your presence there will be necessary to substantiate the proof for which I came hither."

"With all my heart, sir," cried the honest steward; "and after Wednesday you will, I trust, resume your rightful name?"

"Certainly," replied Clarence; "since I am no longer 'the Disowned.'"

Leaving Clarence now for a brief while to renew his acquaintance with the scenes of his childhood, and to offer the tribute of his filial tears to the ashes of a father whose injustice had been but "the stinging of a heart the world had stung"—we return to some old acquaintances in the veracious conduct of our drama.

CHAPTER LXXII.

Upon his couch the veil'd Mokanna lay.
—*The Veiled Prophet.*

THE autumn sun broke through an apartment in a villa in the neighborhood of London, furnished with the most prodigal, yet not tasteless, attention to luxury and show, within which, beside a table strewed with newspapers, letters, and accounts, lay Richard Crauford, extended carelessly upon a sofa, which might almost have contented the Sybarite, who quarrelied with a rose leaf. At his elbow was a bottle half-emptied, and a wine glass just filled. An expression of triumph and enjoyment was visible upon his handsome, but usually inexpressive, countenance.

"Well," said he, taking up a newspaper, "let us read this paragraph again. What a beautiful sensation it is to see one's name in print! —'We understand that Richard Crauford, Esq. M.P. for ——, is to be raised to the dignity of the peerage. There does not, perhaps, exist in the country a gentleman more universally beloved and esteemed'—(mark that, Dicky Crauford)—'The invariable generosity with which his immense wealth has been employed—his high professional honor—the undeviating and consistent integrity of his political career'—(Ay, to be sure, it is only your honest fools who are inconsistent: no man can deviate who has one firm principle, self-interest)—'his manly and energetic attention to the welfare of religion' (he—he—he!), 'conjoined to a fortune almost incalculable, render this condescension of our gracious sovereign no less judicious than deserved! We hear that the title proposed for the new peer, is that of Viscount Innisdale, which, we believe, was formerly in the noble family of which Mr. Crauford is a distant branch.'

"He! he! he! Bravo! bravo! Viscount Innisdale!—noble family—distant branch—the devil I am! What an ignoramus my father was, not to know that! Why, rest his soul, he never knew who his grandfather was;

but the world shall not be equally ignorant of that important point. Let me see, who shall be Viscount Innisdale's great grandfather? Well, well, whoever he is, here's long life to his great grandson! 'Incalculable fortune!' Ay, ay, I hope, at all events, it will never be calculated. But now for my letters. Bah—this wine is a thought too acid for the cellars of Viscount Innisdale! What, another from mother H——! Dark eyes, small mouth—sings like an angel—eighteen! Pish! I am too old for such follies now; 'tis not pretty for Viscount Innisdale. Humph!—Lisbon—seven hundred pounds five shillings and seven pence—halfpenny, is it, or farthing? I must note that down. Loan for King of Prussia. Well, must negotiate that to-morrow. Ah, Hockit, the wine-merchant—pipe of claret in the docks—vintage of 17—. Bravo! all goes smooth for Viscount Innisdale! Pish!—from my damnable wife! What a pill for my lordship! What says she?

"*Dawlish, Devonshire.*

"'You have not, my dearest Richard, answered my letters for months. I do not, however, presume to complain of your silence: I know well that you have a great deal to occupy your time, both in business and pleasure. But one little line, dear Richard—one little line, surely, that is not too much now and then. I am most truly sorry to trouble you again about money; and you must know that I strive to be as saving as possible;'—[Pish!—curse the woman—sent her twenty pounds three months ago!]—'but I really am so distressed, and the people here are so pressing; and at all events, I cannot bear the thought of your wife being disgraced. Pray, forgive me, Richard, and believe how painful it is in me to say so much. I know you will answer this! and, oh, do, do tell me how you are.

"'Ever your affectionate wife,

"'CAROLINE CRAUFORD.'

"Was there ever poor man so plagued? Where's my note-book? Mem.—Send Car. to-morrow £20, to last her the rest of the year. Mem.—Send Mother H—— £100. Mem.—Pay Hockit's bill £830. Bless me, what shall I do with Viscountess Innisdale? Now, if I were not married, I would be son-in-law to a duke. Mem.—Go down to Dawlish, and see if she won't die soon. Healthy situation, I fear—devilish unlucky—must be changed. Mem.—Swamps in Essex. Who's that?"

A knock at the door disturbed Mr. Crauford in his meditations. He started up, hurried the bottle and glass under the sofa, where the descending drapery completely hid them; and, taking up a newspaper, said in a gentle tone, "Come in." A small, thin man, bowing at every step, entered.

"Ah! Bradley, is it you, my good fellow?" said Crauford—"glad to see you—a fine morning; but what brings you from town so early?"

"Why, sir," answered Mr. Bradley, very obsequiously, "something unpleasant has——"

"Merciful Heaven!" cried Crauford, blanched into the whiteness of death, and starting up from the sofa with a violence which frightened the timid Mr. Bradley to the other end of the room—"the counting house—the books—all safe?"

"Yes, sir, yes, *at present*—but—"

"But what, man?"

"Why, honored sir," resumed Mr. Bradley, bowing to the ground, "your partner, Mr. Jessopp, has been very inquisitive about the accounts. He says, Mr. Da Costa, the Spanish merchant, has been insinuating very unpleasant hints, and that he must have a conversation with you at your earliest convenience; and when, sir, I ventured to remonstrate about the unreasonableness of attending to what Mr. Da Costa said, Mr. Jessopp was quite abusive, and declared that there seemed some very mysterious communication between you (begging your pardon, sir,) and me, and that he did not know what business I, who had no share in the firm, had to interfere."

"But," said Crauford, "you were civil to him—did not reply hotly—eh—my good Bradley!"

"Lord forbid, sir—Lord forbid, that I should not know my place better, or that I should give an unbecoming word to the partner of my honored benefactor. But, sir, if I dare venture to say so, I think Mr. Jessopp is a little jealous, or so, of you; he seemed quite in a passion at a paragraph in the paper, about my honored master's becoming a lord."

"Right, honest Bradley, right: he is jealous—we must soothe him. Go, my good fellow—go to him with my compliments, and say, that I will be with him by one. Never fear, this business will be easily settled."

And bowing himself out of the room, Bradley withdrew.

Left alone, a dark cloud gathered over the brow of Mr. Crauford.

"I am on a precipice," thought he; "but if my own brain does not turn giddy with the

prospect, all yet may be safe. Cruel necessity, that obliged me to admit another into the business, that foiled me of Mordaunt, and drove me upon this fawning rascal. So, so—I almost think there is a Providence, now that Mordaunt has grown rich; but then his wife died—ay—ay—God saved *him*, but the devil killed *her*.* He—he—he! But, seriously—seriously, there is danger in the very air I breathe! I must away to that envious Jessopp instantly; but first let me finish the bottle."

CHAPTER LXXIII.

A strange harmonious inclination
Of all degrees to reformation.—*Hudibras.*

About seven miles from W——, on the main road from ———, there was in 17— a solitary public-house, which, by-the-by, is now a magnificent hotel. Like many of its brethren in the more courtly vicinity of the metropolis, this *amœnum hospitium peregrinæ gentis*, then had its peculiar renown for certain dainties of the palate; and various in degree and character were the numerous parties from the neighboring towns and farms, which, upon every legitimate holiday, were wont to assemble at the mansion of mine host, of "the Jolly Angler," in order to feast upon eel-pie, and grow merry over the true Herefordshire cider.

But upon that especial day on which we are about to introduce our reader into the narrow confines of its common parlor, the said hostelry was crowded with persons of a very different description from the peaceable idlers who were ordinarily wont to empty mine host's larder, and forget the price of corn over the divine inspirations of pomarial nectar. Instead of the indolent satisfied air of the saturnalian merry-maker, the vagrant angler, or the gentleman farmer, with his comely dame who "walked in silk attire, and siller had to spare;" instead of the quiet yet glad countenances of such hunters of pleasure and eaters of eel-pie, or the more obstreperous joy of urchins let loose from school to taste some brief and perennial recreation, and mine host's delicacies at the same time; instead of these, the little parlor presented a various and perturbed group, upon whose features neither eel-pie nor Herefordshire cider had wrought the relaxation of a holiday, or the serenity of a momentary content.

The day to which we now refer, was the one immediately preceding that appointed for the far-famed meeting at W——; and many of the patriots, false or real, who journied from a distance to attend that rendezvous, had halted at our host's of the Jolly Angler; both as being within a convenient space from the appointed spot, and as a tabernacle where promiscuous instrusion, and (haply) immoderate charges. were less likely to occur than at the bustling and somewhat extraordinary hotels and inns of the town of W——.

The times in which this meeting was held were those of great popular excitement and discontent; and the purport of the meeting proposed was to petition Parliament against the continuance of the American war, and the king against the continuance of his ministers.

Placards, of an unusually inflammatory and imprudent nature, had given great alarm to the more sober and well-disposed persons in the neighborhood of W——; and so much fear was felt or assumed upon the occasion, that a new detachment of Lord Ulswater's regiment had been especially ordered into the town; and it was generally rumored that the legal authorities would interfere, even by force, for the dispersion of the meeting in question. These circumstances had given the measure a degree of general and anxious interest which it would not otherwise have excited; and while every body talked of the danger of attending the assembly, every body resolved to thrust himself into it.

It was about the goodly hour of noon, and the persons assembled were six in number, all members of the most violent party, and generally considered by friend and foe as embracers of republican tenets. One of these, a little, oily, corpulent personage, would have appeared far too sleek and well fed for a disturber of things existing, had not a freckled, pimpled, and fiery face, a knit brow, and a small black eye of intolerable fierceness, belied the steady and contented appearance of his frame and girth. This gentleman, by name Christopher Culpepper, spoke in a quick, muffled, shuffling sort of tone, like the pace of a Welsh pony, somewhat lame, perfectly

* Voltaire.—"Dieu a puni ce fripon, le diable a noyé les autres."—*Candide.*

broken-winded, but an exemplary ambler for all that.

Next to him sate, with hands clasped over his knees, a thin, small man, with a countenance prematurely wrinkled, and an air of great dejection. Poor Castleton ! his had been, indeed, the bitter lot of a man, honest but weak, who attaches himself, heart and soul, to a public cause which, in his life, at least, is hopeless. Three other men were sitting by the open window, disputing, with the most vehement gestures, upon the character of Wilkes; and at the other window, alone, silent, and absorbed, sat a man whose appearance and features were singularly calculated to arrest and to concentrate attention. His raven hair, grizzled with the first advance of age, still preserved its strong, wiry curl, and luxuriant thickness. His brows, large, bushy, and indicative of great detetmination, met over eyes which, at that moment, were fixed upon vacancy with a look of thought and calmness very unusual to their ordinary restless and rapid glances. His mouth, that great seat of character, was firmly and obstinately shut; and though, at the first observation, its downward curve and iron severity wore the appearance of unmitigated harshness, disdain, and resolve, yet a more attentive deducer of signs from features would not have been able to detect in its expression anything resembling selfishness or sensuality, and in that absence would have found sufficient to redeem the more repellant indications of mind which it betrayed.

Presently the door was opened, and the landlord making some apology to both parties for having no other apartment unoccupied, introduced a personage whose dress and air, as well as a kind of saddle-bag, which he would not entrust to any other bearer than himself, appeared to denote him as one rather addicted to mercantile than political speculations. Certainly he did not seem much at home among the patriotic reformers, who, having glared upon him for a single moment, renewed, without remark, their several attitudes or occupations.

The stranger, after a brief pause, approached the solitary reformer whom we last described; and making a salutation, half timorous and half familiar, thus accosted him—

"Your servant, Mr. Wolfe, your servant. I think I had the pleasure of hearing you a long time ago at the Westminster election: very eloquent you were, sir, very !"

Wolfe looked up for an instant at the face of the speaker, and, not recognizing it, turned abruptly away, threw open the window, and, leaning out, appeared desirous of escaping from all further intrusion on the part of the stranger: but that gentleman was by no means of a nature easily abashed.

"Fine day, sir, for the time of year—very fine day, indeed. October is a charming month, as my lamented friend and customer, the late Lady Waddilove, was accustomed to say. Talking of that, sir, as the winter is now approaching, do you not think it would be prudent, Mr. Wolfe, to provide yourself with an umbrella ? I have an admirable one which I might dispose of: it is from the effects of the late Lady Waddilove. 'Brown,' said her ladyship, a short time before her death—'Brown, you are a good creature; but you ask too much for the Dresden vase. We have known each other a long time—you must take fourteen pounds ten shillings, and you may have that umbrella, in the corner, into the bargain.' Mr. Wolfe, the bargain was completed, and the umbrella became mine — it may now be yours."

And so saying, Mr. Brown, depositing his saddle-bag on the ground, proceeded to unfold an umbrella of singular antiquity and form—a very long stick, tipped with ivory, being surmounted with about a quarter of a yard of sea-green silk, somewhat discolored by time and wear.

"It is a beautiful article, sir," said Mr. Brown, admiringly surveying it—"is it not ?"

"Pshaw !" said Wolfe, impatiently—"what have I to do with your goods and chattels—go and palm the cheatings and impositions of your pitiful trade upon some easier gull."

"Cheatings and impositions, Mr. Wolfe !" cried the slandered Brown, perfectly aghast:—"I would have you to know, sir, that I have served the first families in the country, ay, and in this county too, and never had such words applied to me before. Sir, there was the late Lady Waddilove, and the respected Mrs. Minden, *and her nephew the ambassador*, and the Duchess of Pugadale, and Mr. Mordaunt, of Mordaunt Court, poor gentleman—though he is poor no more," and Mr. Brown proceeded to enumerate the long list of his customers.

Now, we have stated that Wolfe, though he had never known the rank of Mordaunt, was acquainted with his real name; and, as the sound caught his ear, he muttered "Mordaunt—Mordaunt—ay, but not my former acquaintance—not him who was called Glendower. No, no—the man cannot mean him."

"Yes, sir, but I do mean him," cried Brown, in a rage. "I do mean that Mr. Glendower, who afterwards took another name, but whose real appellation is Mr. Algernon Mordaunt, of Mordaunt Court, in this county, sir."

"What description of man is he?" said Wolfe; "rather tall, slender, with an air and mien like a king's, I was going to say—but better than a king's—like a free man's?"

"Ay, ay,—the same," answered Mr. Brown, sullenly; "but why should I tell you—'cheating and imposition,' indeed!—I am sure my word can be of no avail to you—and I shan't stay here any longer to be insulted, Mr. Wolfe—which, I am sure, talking of freemen, no freeman ought to submit to; but as the late Lady Waddilove once very wisely said to me, 'Brown, never have anything to do with those republicans, they are the worst tyrants of all.' Good morning, Mr. Wolfe—gentlemen, your servant—'cheating and imposition,' indeed!"—and Mr. Brown banged the door as he departed.

"Wolfe," said Mr. Christopher Culpepper, "who is that man?"

"I know not," answered the republican, laconically, and gazing on the ground, apparently in thought.

"He has the air of a slave," quoth the free Culpepper, "and slaves cannot bear the company of free men; therefore he did right to go—whe—w!—Had we a proper, and thorough, and efficient reform, human nature would not be thus debased by trades, and callings, and barters, and exchange, for all professions are injurious to the character and the dignity of man—whe—w!—but, as I shall prove upon the hustings to-morrow, it is in vain to hope for any amendment in the wretched state of things until the people of these realms are fully, freely, and fairly represented—whe—w!—Gentlemen, it is past two, and we have not ordered dinner—whe—w!"—(N.B. this ejaculation denotes the kind of snuffle which lent peculiar energy to the dicta of Mr. Culpepper.)

"Ring the bell, then, and summon the landlord," said, very pertinently, one of the three disputants upon the character of Wilkes.

The landlord appeared; dinner was ordered.

"Pray," said Wolfe, "has that man, Mr. Brown, I think he called himself, left the inn?"

"He has, sir, for he was mightily offended at something which"—

"And," interrupted Wolfe, "how far hence does Mr. Mordaunt live?"

"About five miles on the other side of W——," answered mine host.

Wolfe rose, seized his hat, and was about to depart.

"Stay, stay," cried citizen Christopher Culpepper; "you will not leave us till after dinner?"

"I shall dine at W——," answered Wolfe, quitting the room.

"Then our reckoning will be heavier," said Culpepper. "It is not handsome in Wolfe to leave us—whe—w!—Really I think that our brother in the great cause has of late relaxed in his attentions and zeal to the goddess of our devotions—whe—w!"

"It is human nature!" cried one of the three disputants upon the character of Wilkes.

"It is not human nature!" cried the second disputant, folding his arms doggedly, in preparation for a discussion.

"Contemptible human nature!" exclaimed the third disputant, soliloquizing with a supercilious expression of hateful disdain.

"Poor human nature!" murmured Castleton, looking upward with a sigh; and though we have not given to that gentleman other words than these, we think they are almost sufficient to let our readers into his character.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

Silvis, ubi passim
Palantes error certo de tramite pellit,
Ille sinistrorsum hic dextrorsum abit; unus utrique
Error, sed varlis illudit partibus.*—HORAT.

As Wolfe strode away from the inn, he muttered to himself—

"Can it be that Mordaunt has suddenly

* Wandering in those woods where error evermore forces life's stragglers from the beaten path—this one deflects to the left—his fellow chooses the exact contrary. The fault is all the same in each, but it excuses itself by a thousand different reasons.

grown rich? If so, I rejoice at it. True, that he was not for our cause, but he had the spirit and the heart which belonged to it. Had he not been bred among the prejudices of birth, or had he lived in stormier times, he might have been the foremost champion of freedom. As it is, I rather lament than condemn. Yet I would fain see him once more. Perhaps prosperity may have altered his philosophy. But can he, indeed, be the same Mordaunt of whom that trading itinerant spoke? Can he have risen to the pernicious eminence of a landed aristocrat? Well, it is worth the journey; for if he have power in the neighborhood, I am certain that he will exert it for our protection; and at the worst, I shall escape from the idle words of my compatriots. Oh! if it were possible that the advocates could debase the glory of the cause, how long since should I have flinched from the hardship and the service to which my life is devoted! Self-interest, Envy, that snarls at all above it, without even the beast's courage to bite—Folly, that knows not the substance of freedom, but loves the glitter of its name—Fear, that falters—Crime, that seeks in licentiousness an excuse—Disappointment, only craving occasion to rail—Hatred—Sourness, boasting of zeal, but only venting the blackness of rancor and evil passion—all these make our adherents, and give our foes the handle and the privilege to scorn and to despise. But man chooses the object, and Fate only furnishes the tools. Happy for our posterity, that when the object is once gained, the frailty of the tools will be no more!"

Thus, soliloquizing, the republican walked rapidly onwards, till a turn of the road brought before his eye the form of Mr. Brown, seated upon a little rough pony, and "whistling as he went, for want of thought."

Wolfe quickened his pace, and soon overtook him.

"You must forgive me, my good man," said he soothingly, "I meant not to impeach your honesty or your calling. Perhaps I was hasty and peevish; and, in sad earnest, I have much to tease and distract me."

"Well, sir, well," answered Mr. Brown, greatly mollified: "I am sure no Christian can be more forgiving than I am; and, since you are sorry for what you were pleased to say, let us think no more about it. But touching the umbrella, Mr. Wolfe—have you a mind for that interesting and useful relic of the late Lady Waddilove?"

"Not at present, I thank you," said Wolfe, mildly: "I care little for the inclemencies of the heavens, and you may find many to whom your proffered defence from them may be more acceptable. But tell me if the Mr. Mordaunt you mentioned was ever residing in town, and in very indifferent circumstances?"

"Probably he was," said the cautious Brown, who, as we before said, had been bribed into silence, and who now grievously repented that passion had betrayed him into the imprudence of candor; "but I really do not busy myself about other people's affairs. 'Brown,' said the late Lady Waddilove to me—'Brown, you are a good creature, and never talk of what does not concern you.' Those, Mr. Wolfe, were her Ladyship's own words!"

"As you please," said the reformer, who did not want shrewdness, and saw that his point was already sufficiently gained; "as you please. And now, to change the subject, I suppose we shall have your attendance at the meeting at W—— to-morrow?"

"Ay," replied the worthy Brown; "I thought it likely I should meet many of my old customers in the town on such a busy occasion; so I went a little out of my way home to London in order to spend a night or two there. Indeed, I have some valuable articles for Mr. Glumford, the magistrate, who will be in attendance to-morrow."

"They say," observed Wolfe, "that the magistrates, against all law, right, and custom, will dare to interfere with, and resist, the meeting. Think you report says true?"

"Nay," returned Brown, prudently, "I cannot exactly pretend to decide the question: all I know is that Squire Glumford said to me, at his own house, five days ago, as he was drawing on his boots—'Brown,' said he, 'Brown, mark my words, we shall do for those rebellious dogs!'"

"Did he say so?" muttered Wolfe between his teeth. "Oh. for the old times, or those yet to come, when our answer would have been, or shall be—the sword!"

"And you know," pursued Mr. Brown, "that Lord Ulswater and his regiment are in the town, and have even made great preparations against the meeting a week ago."

"I *have* heard this," said Wolfe; "but I cannot think that any body of armed men dare interrupt or attack a convocation of peaceable subjects, met solely to petition parliament against famine for themselves and slavery for their children."

"Famine!" quoth Mr. Brown. "Indeed it is very true—very!—times are dreadfully bad. I can scarcely get my own living—parliament certainly ought to do something; but you must forgive me, Mr. Wolfe: it may be dangerous to talk with you on these matters: and, now I think of it, the sooner I get to W—— the better—good morning—a shower's coming on:—You won't have the umbrella, then?"

"They dare not," said Wolfe to himself, "no, no,—they dare not attack us—they dare not;" and clenching his fist, he pursued, with a quicker step, and a more erect mien, his solitary way.

When he was about the distance of three miles from W——, he was overtaken by a middle aged man, of a frank air and a respectable appearance. "Good day, sir," said he; "we seem to be journeying the same way—will it be against your wishes to join company?"

Wolfe assented, and the stranger resumed:

"I suppose, sir, you intend to be present at the meeting at W—— to-morrow. There will be an immense concourse, and the entrance of a new detachment of soldiers, and the various reports of the likelihood of their interference with the assembly, make it an object of some interest and anxiety to look forward to."

"True—true," said Wolfe, slowly, eyeing his new acquaintance with a deliberate and scrutinizing attention. "It will, indeed, be interesting to see how far an evil and hardy government will venture to encroach upon the rights of the people, which it ruins while it pretends to rule."

"Of a truth," rejoined the other, "I rejoice that I am no politician. I believe my spirit is as free as any cooped in the narrow dungeon of earth's clay can well be; yet I confess that it has drawn none of its liberty from book, pamphlet, speech, or newspaper, of modern times."

"So much the worse for yon, sir," said Wolfe, sourly: "the man who has health and education can find no excuse for supineness or indifference to that form of legislation by which his country decays or prospers."

"Why," said the other, gaily, "I willingly confess myself less of a patriot than a philosopher; and as long as I am harmless, I strive very little to be useful, in a public capacity; in a private one, as a father, a husband, and a neighbor, I trust I am not utterly without my value."

"Pish!" cried Wolfe; "let no man who forgets his public duties, prate of his private merits. I tell you, man, that he who can advance by a single hair's breadth the happiness or the freedom of mankind has done more to save his own soul than if he had paced every step of the narrow circle of his domestic life with the regularity of clock-work."

"You may be right," quoth the stranger, carelessly; "but I look on things in the mass, and perhaps see only the superficies, while you, I perceive already, are a lover of the abstract. For my part, Harry Fielding's two definitions seem to me excellent. 'Patriot—a candidate for a place!' 'Politics—the art of getting such a place!' Perhaps, sir, as you seem a man of education, you remember the words of our great novelist."

"No!" answered Wolfe, a little contemptuously—"I cannot say that I burthen my memory with the deleterious witticisms and shallow remarks of writers of fancy. It has been a mighty and spreading evil to the world, that the vain fictions of the poets, or the exaggerations of novelists, have been hitherto so welcomed and extolled. Better had it been for us if the destruction of the lettered wealth at Alexandria had included all the lighter works which have floated, from their very levity, down the stream of time, an example and a corruption to the degraded geniuses of later days."

The eyes of the stranger sparkled. "Why, you outgoth the Goth!" exclaimed he, sharply. "But you surely preach against what you have not studied. Confess that you are but slightly acquainted with Shakspeare, and Spenser, and noble Dan Chaucer. Ay, if you knew them as well as I do, you would, like me, give

> To hem faith and full credence,
> And in your heart have hem in reverence."

"Pish!" again muttered Wolfe; and then rejoined aloud, "It grieves me to see time so

wasted, and judgment so perverted, as yours appear to have been; but it fills me with pity and surprise, as well as grief, to find that, so far from shame at the effeminacy of your studies, you appear to glory and exult in them."

"May the Lord help me, and lighten thee," said Cole—for it was he. "You are at least not a novelty in human wisdom, whatever you may be in character; for you are far from the only one proud of being ignorant, and pitying those who are not so."

Wolfe darted one of his looks of fire at the speaker, who, nothing abashed, met the glance with an eye, if not as fiery, at least as bold.

"I see," said the republican, "that we shall not agree upon the topics you have started. If you still intrude your society upon me, you will, at least, choose some other subject of conversation."

"Pardon me," said Cole, whose very studies, while they had excited, in their self-defence, his momentary warmth, made him habitually courteous and urbane—"pardon me for my hastiness of expression. I own myself in fault." And, with this apology, our ex-king slid into the new topics which the scenery and the weather afforded him.

Wolfe, bent upon the object of his present mission, made some inquiries respecting Mordaunt; and though Cole only shared the uncertain information of the country gossips, as to the past history of that person, yet the little he did know was sufficient to confirm the republican in his belief of Algernon's identity; while the ex-gipsy's account of his rank and reputation in the country made Wolfe doubly anxious to secure, if possible, his good offices and interference on behalf of the meeting. But the conversation was not always restricted to neutral and indifferent ground, but, ever and anon, wandered into various allusions or opinions, from the one, certain to beget retort or controversy in the other.

Had we time and our reader patience, it would have been a rare and a fine contrast to have noted more at large the differences of thought and opinion between the companions; each in his several way so ardent for liberty, and so impatient of the control and customs of society; each so enthusiastic for the same object, yet so coldly contemptuous to the enthusiasm of the other. The one guided only by his poetical and erratic tastes, the other solely by dreams, seeming to the world no less baseless, yet, to his own mind, bearing the name of stern judgment and inflexible truth. Both men of active and adventurous spirits, to whom forms were fetters, and ceremonies odious; yet, deriving from that mutual similarity only pity for mutual perversion, they were memorable instances of the great differences congeniality itself will occasion, and of the never-ending varieties which minds, rather under the influence of imagination than judgment, will create.

CHAPTER LXXV.

Gratis anhelans, multa agendo, nihil agens.*
—PHÆDRUS.

UPON entering the town, the streets displayed all the bustle and excitement which the approaching meeting was eminently calculated to create in a place ordinarily quiescent and undisturbed; groups of men were scattered in different parts, conversing with great eagerness; while here and there, some Demosthenes of the town, impatient of the coming strife, was haranguing his little knot of admiring friends, and preparing his oratorical organs by petty skirmishing for the grand battle of the morrow. Now and then the eye roved upon the gaunt forms of Lord Ulswater's troopers, as they strolled idly along the streets, in pairs, perfectly uninterested by the great event which set all the more peaceable inmates of the town in a ferment, and returning, with a slighting and supercilious glance, the angry looks and muttered anathemas which, ever and anon, the hardier spirits of the petitioning party liberally bestowed upon them.

As Wolfe and his comrade entered the main street, the former was accosted by some one of his compatriots, who, seizing him by the arm, was about to apprise the neighboring idlers, by a sudden exclamation, of the welcome entrance of the eloquent and noted republican. But Wolfe perceived, and thwarted his design.

"Hush!" said he, in a low voice; "I am only now on my way to an old friend, who seems a man of influence in these parts, and

* Panting and laboring in vain; doing much,—effecting nothing.

may be of avail to us on the morrow; keep silence, therefore, with regard to my coming till I return. I would not have my errand interrupted."

"As you will," said the brother-spirit; "but whom have you here—a fellow laborer?" and the reformer pointed to Cole, who, with an expression of shrewd humor, blended with a sort of philosophical compassion, stood at a little distance waiting for Wolfe, and eyeing the motley groups assembled before him.

"No," answered Wolfe; "he is some vain and idle sower of unprofitable flowers; a thing who loves poetry, and, for aught I know, writes it; but that reminds me that I must rid myself of his company; yet stay—do you know this neighborhood sufficiently to serve me as a guide?"

"Ay," quoth the other; "I was born within three miles of the town."

"Indeed!" rejoined Wolfe; "then, perhaps, you can tell me if there is any way of reaching a place called Mordaunt Court, without passing through the more public and crowded thoroughfares."

"To be sure," rejoined the brother-spirit; "you have only to turn to the right up yon hill, and you will in an instant be out of the purlieus and precincts of W——, and on your shortest road to Mordaunt Court; but surely it is not to its owner that you are bound?"

"And why not?" said Wolfe.

"Because," replied the other, "he is the wealthiest, the highest, and, as report says, the haughtiest aristocrat of these parts."

"So much the better, then," said Wolfe, "can he aid us in obtaining a quiet hearing to-morrow, undisturbed by those liveried varlets of hire, who are termed, in sooth, Britain's defence! Much better, when we think of all they cost us to pamper and to clothe, should they be termed Britain's ruin; but, farewell for the present; we shall meet to-night; your lodgings———?"

"Yonder," said the other, pointing to a small inn opposite; and Wolfe, nodding his adieu, returned to Cole, whose vivacious and restless nature had already made him impatient of his companion's delay.

"I must take my leave of you now," said Wolfe, "which I do with a hearty exhortation that you will change your studies, fit only for effeminate and enslaved minds."

"And I return the exhortation," answered Cole. "Your studies seem to me tenfold more crippling than mine: mine take all this earth's restraint from me, and yours seem only to remind you that all earth *is* restraint: mine show me whatever worlds the fondest fancy could desire; yours only the follies and chains of this. In short, while 'my mind to me a *kingdom* is,' yours seem to consider the whole universe itself nothing but a great meeting for the purpose of abusing ministers and demanding reform!"

Not too well pleased by this answer, and at the same time indisposed to the delay of further reply, Wolfe contented himself with an iron sneer of disdain, and, turning on his heel, strode rapidly away in the direction his friend had indicated.

Meanwhile, Cole followed him with his eye, till he was out of sight, and then muttered to himself—"Never was there a fitter addition to old Barclay's 'Ship of Fools!' I should not wonder if this man's patriotism leads him from despising the legislature into breaking the law; and, faith, the surest way to the gallows is less through vice than discontent, yet, I would fain hope better things for him—for, methinks, he is neither a common declaimer, nor an ordinary man."

With these words the honest Cole turned away, and strolling towards the Golden Fleece, soon found himself in the hospitable mansion of Mistress and Mister Merrylack.

While the ex-king was taking his ease at his inn, Wolfe proceeded to Mordaunt Court. The result of the meeting that there ensued was a determination on the part of Algernon to repair immediately to W——.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

The commons here in Kent are up in arms.
—*Second Part of Henry VI.*

When Mordaunt arrived at W——, he found that the provincial deities (who were all assembled at dinner with the principal inhabitants of the town), in whose hands the fate of the meeting was placed, were in great doubt and grievous consternation. He came in time, first to balance the votes, and ultimately to decide

them. His mind, prudent and acute, when turned to worldly affairs, saw in a glance the harmless, though noisy, nature of the meeting; and he felt that the worst course the government or the county could pursue would be to raise into importance, by violence, what otherwise would meet with ridicule from most, and indifference from the rest.

His large estates, his ancient name, his high reputation for talent, joined to that manner, half eloquent and half commanding, which rarely fails of effect when deliberation only requires a straw on either side to become decision —all these rendered his interference of immediate avail; and it was settled that the meeting should, as similar assemblies had done before, proceed and conclude, undisturbed by the higher powers, so long as no positive act of sedition to the government or danger to the town was committed.

Scarcely was this arrangement agreed upon, before Lord Ulswater, who had hitherto been absent, entered the room in which the magisterial conclave was assembled. Mr. Glumford (whom our readers will possibly remember as the suitor to Isabel St. Leger, and who had at first opposed, and then reluctantly subscribed to, Mordaunt's interference) bustled up to him.

"So, so, my lord," said he, "since I had the honor of seeing your lordship, quite a new sort of trump has been turned up."

"I do not comprehend your metaphorical elegancies of speech, Mr. Glumford," said Lord Ulswater.

Mr. Glumford explained. Lord Ulswater's cheek grew scarlet. "So Mr. Mordaunt has effected this wise alteration," said he.

"Nobody else, my lord, nobody else; and I am sure, though your lordship's estates are at the other end of the county, yet they are much larger than his; and since your lordship has a troop at your command, and that sort of thing, I would not, if I were your lordship, suffer any such opposition to your wishes."

Without making a reply to this harangue, Lord Ulswater stalked haughtily up to Mordaunt, who was leaning against the wainscot, and conversing with those around him.

"I cannot but conceive, Mr. Mordaunt," said he, with a formal bow, "that I have been misinformed in the intelligence I have just received."

"Lord Ulswater will, perhaps, inform me to what intelligence he alludes."

"That Mr. Mordaunt, the representative of one of the noblest families in England, has given the encouragement and influence of his name and rank to the designs of a seditious and turbulent mob."

Mordaunt smiled slightly, as he replied—"Your lordship *rightly* believes that you are misinformed. It is precisely because I would *not* have the mob you speak of seditious or turbulent, that I have made it my request that the meeting of to-morrow should be suffered to pass off undisturbed."

"Then, sir," cried Lord Ulswater, striking the table with a violence which caused three reverend potentates of the province to start back in dismay, "I cannot but consider such interference on your part to the last degree impolitic and uncalled for: these, sir, are times of great danger to the state, and in which it is indispensably requisite to support and strengthen the authority of the law."

"I waive, at present," answered Mordaunt, "all reply to language neither courteous nor appropriate. I doubt not but that the magistrates will decide as is most in accordance with the spirit of that law which, in this, and in all times, should be supported."

"Sir," said Lord Ulswater, losing his temper more and more, as he observed that the by-standers, whom he had been accustomed to awe, all visibly inclined to the opinion of Mordaunt, "sir, if your name has been instrumental in producing so unfortunate a determination on the part of the magistrates, I shall hold you responsible to the government for those results which ordinary prudence may calculate upon."

"When Lord Ulswater," said Mordaunt, sternly, "has learned what is due, not only to the courtesies of society, but to those legitimate authorities of his country, who (he ventures to suppose) are to be influenced contrary to their sense of duty, by any individual, then he may, perhaps, find leisure to make himself better acquainted with the nature of those laws which he now so vehemently upholds."

"Mr. Mordaunt, you will consider yourself answerable to me for those words," said Lord Ulswater, with a tone of voice unnaturally calm; and the angry flush of his countenance gave place to a livid paleness. Then, turning on his heel, he left the room.

As he repaired homeward, he saw one of his soldiers engaged in a loud and angry contest with a man, in the plain garb of a peaceful citizen; a third person, standing by, appeared ineffectually endeavoring to pacify the disputants. A rigid disciplinarian, Lord Ulswater allowed not even party feeling, roused as it was, to conquer professional habits. He called off the soldier, and the man with whom the latter had been engaged, immediately came up to Lord Ulswater, with a step as haughty as his own. The third person, who had attempted the peace-maker, followed him.

"I presume, sir," said he, "that you are an officer of this man's regiment."

"I am the commanding officer, sir," said Lord Ulswater, very little relishing the air and tone of the person who addressed him.

"Then," answered the man (who was, indeed, no other than Wolfe, who, having returned to W—— with Mordaunt, had already succeeded in embroiling himself in a dispute) —"then, sir, I look to you for his punishment, and my redress;" and Wolfe proceeded, in his own exaggerated language, to detail a very reasonable cause of complaint. The fact was, that Wolfe, meeting one of his compatriots, and conversing with him somewhat loudly, had uttered some words which attracted the spleen of the soldier, who was reeling home, very comfortably intoxicated; and the soldier had, most assuredly, indulged in a copious abuse of the d——d rebel, who could not walk the streets without chattering sedition.

Wolfe's friend confirmed the statement.

The trooper attempted to justify himself; but Lord Ulswater saw his intoxication in an instant, and, secretly vexed that the complaint was not on the other side, ordered the soldier to his quarters, with a brief but sure threat of punishment on the morrow. Not willing, however, to part with the "d——d rebel," on terms so flattering to the latter, Lord Ulswater, turning to Wolfe, with a severe and angry air, said—

"As for you, fellow, I believe the whole fault was on your side; and if you dare again give vent to your disaffected ravings, I shall have you sent to prison, to tame your rank blood upon bread and water. Begone, and think yourself fortunate to escape now!"

The fierce spirit of Wolfe was in arms on the instant—and his reply, in subjecting him to Lord Ulswater's threat, might at least have prevented his enlightening the public on the morrow, had not his friend, a peaceable, prudent man, seized him by the arm, and whispered—"What are you about?—Consider for what you are here—another word may rob the assembly of your presence. A man bent on a public cause must not, on the eve of its trial, enlist in a private quarrel."

"True, my friend, true," said Wolfe, swallowing his rage, and eyeing Lord Ulswater's retreating figure with a menacing look; "but the time may yet come when I shall have license to retaliate on the upstart."

"So be it," quoth the other—"he is our bitterest enemy. You know, perhaps, that he is Lord Ulswater, of the ——— regiment? it has been at his instigation that the magistrates proposed to disturb the meeting. He has been known publicly to say that all who attended the assembly ought to be given up to the swords of his troopers."

"The butchering dastard!—to dream even of attacking unarmed men; but enough of him —I must tarry yet in the street to hear what success our intercessor has obtained." And as Wolfe passed the house in which the magisterial conclave sat, Mordaunt came out and accosted him.

"You have sworn to me that your purpose is peaceable," said Mordaunt.

"Unquestionably," answered Wolfe.

"And you will pledge yourself that no disturbance, that can either be effected, or counteracted, by yourself and friends, shall take place?"

"I will."

"Enough!" answered Mordaunt. "Remember, that if you commit the least act that can be thought dangerous, I may not be able to preserve you from the military. As it is, your meeting will be unopposed."

Contrary to Lord Ulswater's prediction, the meeting went off as quietly as an elderly maiden's tea-party. The speakers, even Wolfe, not only took especial pains to recommend order and peace, but avoided, for the most part, all inflammatory enlargement upon the grievances of which they complained. And the sage foreboders of evil, who had locked up their silver spoons, and shaken their heads very wisely for the last week, had the agreeable mortification of observing rather an appearance of good hu-

mor upon the countenances of the multitude than that ferocious determination against the lives and limbs of the well-affected which they had so sorrowfully anticipated.

As Mordaunt (who had been present during the whole time of the meeting) mounted his horse, and quitted the ground, Lord Ulswater, having just left his quarters, where he had been all day in expectation of some violent act of the orators or the mob, demanding his military services, caught sight of him; with a sudden recollection of his own passionate threat. There had been nothing in Mordaunt's words which would, in our times, have justified a challenge; but in that day duels were fought upon the slightest provocation. Lord Ulswater therefore rode up at once to a gentleman with whom he had some intimate acquaintance, and briefly saying that he had been insulted both as an officer and gentleman, by Mr. Mordaunt, requested his friend to call upon that gentleman, and demand satisfaction.

"To-morrow," said Lord Ulswater, "I have the misfortune to be unavoidably engaged. The next day you can appoint place and time of meeting."

"I must first see the gentleman to whom Mr. Mordaunt may refer me," said the friend prudently; "and perhaps your honor may be satisfied without any hostile meeting at all."

"I think not," said Lord Ulswater carelessly, as he rode away, "for Mr. Mordaunt is a gentleman, and gentlemen never apologize."

Wolfe was standing unobserved near Lord Ulswater while the latter thus instructed his proposed second—"Man of blood," muttered the republican; "with homicide thy code of honor, and massacre thine interpretation of law, by violence wouldst thou rule, and by violence mayst thou perish!"

CHAPTER LXXVII.

Jam te premet nox, fabulæque Manes
Et domus exilis Plutonia.*—HOR.

THE morning was dull and heavy, as Lord Ulswater mounted his horse, and, unattended, took his way towards Westborough Park. His manner was unusually thoughtful and absent; perhaps two affairs upon his hands, either of which seemed likely to end in bloodshed, were sufficient to bring reflection even to the mind of a cavalry officer.

He had scarcely got out of the town before he was overtaken by our worthy friend, Mr. Glumford. As he had been a firm ally of Lord Ulswater in the contest respecting the meeting, so, when he joined and saluted that nobleman, Lord Ulswater, mindful of past services, returned his greeting with an air rather of condescension than hauteur. To say truth, his lordship was never very fond of utter loneliness, and the respectful bearing of Glumford, joined to that mutual congeniality which sympathy in political views always occasions, made him more pleased with the society than shocked with the intrusion of the squire; so that when Glumford said, "If your lordship's way lies along this road for the next five or six miles, perhaps you will allow me the honor of accompanying you," Lord Ulswater graciously signified his consent to the proposal, and carelessly mentioning that he was going to Westborough Park, slid into that conversation with his new companion which the meeting and its actors afforded.

Turn we for an instant to Clarence. At the appointed hour he had arrived at Westborough Park, and, bidding his companion, the trusty Wardour, remain within the chaise which had conveyed them, he was ushered, with a trembling heart, but a mien erect and self-composed, into Lady Westborough's presence; the marchioness was alone.

"I am sensible, sir," said she, with a little embarrassment, "that it is not exactly becoming to my station and circumstances to suffer a meeting of the present nature between Lord Ulswater and yourself to be held within this house; but I could not resist the request of Lord Ulswater, conscious, from his character, that it could contain nothing detrimental to the—to the consideration and delicacy due to Lady Flora Ardenne."

Clarence bowed. "So far as I am concerned," said he, "I feel confident that Lady Westborough will not repent of her condescension."

There was a pause.

"It is singular," said Lady Westborough, looking to the clock upon an opposite table, "that Lord Ulswater is not yet arrived."

* This very hour Death shall overcome thee, and the fabled Manes, and the shadowy Plutonian realms receive thee.

"It is," said Clarence, scarcely conscious of his words, and wondering whether Lady Flora would deign to appear.

Another pause. Lady Westborough felt the awkwardness of her situation.

Clarence made an effort to recover himself.

"I do not see," said he, "the necessity of delaying the explanation I have to offer to your ladyship till my Lord Ulswater deems it suitable to appear. Allow me at once to enter upon a history, told in few words, and easily proved."

"Stay," said Lady Westborough, struggling with her curiosity; "it is due to one who has stood in so peculiar a situation in our family to wait yet a little longer for his coming. We will, therefore, till the hour is completed, postpone the object of our meeting.

Clarence again bowed, and was silent. Another and a longer pause ensued; it was broken by the sound of the clock striking—the hour was completed.

"Now,"—began Clarence—when he was interrupted by a sudden and violent commotion in the hall. Above all was heard a loud and piercing cry, in which Clarence recognized the voice of the old steward. He rose abruptly and stood motionless and aghast: his eyes met those of Lady Westborough, who, pale and agitated, lost, for the moment, all her habitual self-command. The sound increased: Clarence rushed from the room into the hall; the open door of the apartment revealed to Lady Westborough, as to him, a sight which allowed her no farther time for hesitation. She hurried after Clarence into the hall, gave one look, uttered one shriek of horror, and fainted.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

Iden.—But thou wilt brave me in these saucy terms.
Cade.—Brave thee! ay, by the best blood that ever was broached, and beard thee too.—SHAKSPEARE.

"You see, my lord," said Mr. Glumford to Lord Ulswater, as they rode slowly on, "that as long as those rebellious scoundrels are indulged in their spoutings and meetings, and that sort of thing, that—that there will be no bearing them."

"Very judiciously remarked, sir," replied Lord Ulster. "I wish all gentlemen of birth and consideration viewed the question in the same calm, dispassionate, and profound light that you do. Would to heaven it were left to me to clear the country of those mutinous and dangerous rascals—I would make speedy and sure work of it."

"I am certain you would, my lord—I am certain you would. It is a thousand pities that pompous fellow, Mordaunt, interfered yesterday, with his moderation, and policy, and all that sort of thing—so foolish, you know, my lord—mere theory, and romance, and that sort of thing: we should have had it all our own way, if he had not."

Lord Ulswater played with his riding-whip, but did not reply. Mr. Glumford continued:

"Pray, my lord, did your lordship see what an ugly, ill-dressed set of dogs those *meetingers* were—that Wolfe, above all? Oh, he's a horrid-looking fellow. By-the-bye, he left the town this very morning; I saw him take leave of his friends in the street just before I set out. He is going to some other meeting—on foot, too. Only think of the folly of talking about the policy, and prudence, and humanity, and that sort of thing, of sparing such a pitiful poor fellow as that—can't afford a chaise, or a stage-coach even, my lord—positively can't."

"You see the matter exactly in its true light, Mr. Glumford," said his lordship, patting his fine horse, which was somewhat impatient of the slow pace of its companion.

"A very beautiful animal of your lordship's," said Mr. Glumford, spurring his own horse—a heavy, dull quadruped, with an obstinate ill-set tail, a low shoulder, and a Roman nose. "I am very partial to horses myself, and love a fine horse as well as anybody."

Lord Ulswater cast a glance at his companion's steed, and seeing nothing in its qualities to justify this assertion of attachment to fine horses, was silent; Lord Ulswater never flattered even his mistress, much less Mr. Glumford.

"I will tell you, my lord," continued Mr. Glumford, "what a bargain this horse was;" and the squire proceeded, much to Lord Ulswater's discontent, to detail the history of his craft in making the said bargain.

The riders were now entering a part of the road, a little more than two miles from Westborough Park, in which the features of the neighboring country took a bolder and ruder aspect than they had hitherto worn. On

one side of the road, the view opened upon a descent of considerable depth, and the dull sun looked drearily over a valley in which large fallow fields, a distant and solitary spire, and a few stinted and withering trees, formed the chief characteristics. On the other side of the road a narrow foot-path was separated from the highway by occasional posts; and on this path Lord Ulswater—(how the minute and daily occurrences of life show the grand pervading principles of character)—was, at the time we refer to, riding, in preference to the established thoroughfare for equestrian and aurigal travellers. The side of this path farthest from the road was bordered by a steep declivity of stony and gravelly earth, which almost deserved the dignified appellation of a precipice; and it was with no small exertion of dexterous horsemanship that Lord Ulswater kept his spirited and susceptible steed upon the narrow and somewhat perilous path, in spite of its frequent starts at the rugged descent below.

"I think, my lord, if I may venture to say so," said Mr. Glumford, having just finished the narration of his bargain, "that it would be better for you to take the high road just at present; for the descent from the foot-path is steep and abrupt, and deuced crumbling; so that if your lordship's horse shied or took a wrong step, it might be attended with unpleasant consequences—a fall, or that sort of thing."

"You are very good, sir," said Lord Ulswater, who, like most proud people, conceived advice an insult: "but I imagine myself capable of guiding my horse, at least upon a road so excellent as this."

"Certainly, my lord, certainly; I beg your pardon: but—bless me, who is that tall fellow in black, talking to himself yonder, my lord? The turn of the road hides him from *you* just at present; but I see him well. Ha-ha! what gestures he uses! I dare say he is one of the petitioners, and—yes, my lord, by Jupiter, it is Wolfe himself! You had better (excuse me, my lord) come down from the foot-path—it is not wide enough for two people—and Wolfe, I dare say, a d—d rascal, would not get out of the way for the devil himself! He's a nasty, black, fierce-looking fellow; I would not for something meet him in a dark night, or that sort of thing!"

"I do not exactly understand, Mr. Glumford," returned Lord Ulswater, with a supercilious glance at that gentleman, "what peculiarities of temper you are pleased to impute to me, or from what you deduce the supposition that I shall move out of my way for a person like Mr. Woolt, or Wolfe, or whatever be his name."

"I beg your pardon, my lord, I am sure," answered Glumford; "of course your lordship knows best, and if the rogue is impertinent, why, I'm a magistrate, and will commit him; though, to be sure," continued our righteous Daniel, in a lower key, "he has a right to walk upon the footpath without being ridden over, or that sort of thing."

The equestrians were now very near Wolfe, who turning hastily round, perceived, and immediately recognized Lord Ulswater.—"Ah-ha," muttered he to himself, "here comes the insolent thirster for blood, grudging *us*, seemingly, even the meagre comfort of the path which his horse's hoofs are breaking up—yet, thank Heaven," added the republican, looking with a stern satisfaction at the narrowness of the footing, "he cannot very well pass me, and the free lion does not move out of his way for such pampered kine as those to which this creature belongs."

Actuated by this thought, Wolfe almost insensibly moved entirely into the middle of the path, so that what with the posts on one side, and the abrupt and undefended precipice, if we may so call it, on the other, it was quite impossible for any horseman to pass the republican, unless over his body.

Lord Ulswater marked the motion, and did not want penetration to perceive the cause. Glad of an opportunity to wreak some portion of his irritation against a member of a body so offensive to his mind, and which had the day before obtained a sort of triumph over his exertions against them: and rendered obstinate in his intention by the pique he had felt at Glumford's caution, Lord Ulswater, tightening his rein, and humming, with apparent indifference, a popular tune, continued his progress till he was within a foot of the republican. Then, checking his horse for a moment, he called, in a tone of quiet arrogance, to Wolfe to withdraw himself on one side till he had passed.

The fierce blood of the republican, which the least breath of oppression sufficed to kin-

dle, and which yet boiled with the remembrance of Lord Ulswater's threat to him two nights before, was on fire at this command. He stopped short, and turning half round, stood erect in the strength and power of his singularly tall and not ungraceful form. "Poor and proud fool," said he, with a voice of the most biting scorn, and fixing an eye eloquent of ire and menaced danger upon the calmly contemptuous countenance of the patrician—"Poor and proud fool, do you think that your privileges have already reached so pleasant a pitch that you may ride over men like dust? Off, fool—the basest peasant in England, degraded as he is, would resist, while he ridiculed your arrogance."

Without deigning any reply, Lord Ulswater spurred his horse; the spirited animal bounded forward, almost on the very person of the obstructor of the path; with uncommon agility Wolfe drew aside from the danger, seized, with a powerful grasp, the bridle, and abruptly arresting the horse, backed it fearfully towards the descent. Enraged beyond all presence of mind, the fated nobleman, raising his whip, struck violently at the republican. The latter, as he felt the blow, uttered a single shout of such ferocity that it curdled the timorous blood of Glumford, and with a giant and iron hand he backed the horse several paces down the precipice. The treacherous earth crumbled beneath the weight, and Lord Ulswater, spurring his steed violently at the same instant that Wolfe so sharply and strongly curbed it, the affrighted animal reared violently, forced the rein from Wolfe, stood erect for a moment of horror to the spectator, and then, as its footing and balance alike failed it, fell backward, and rolled over and over its unfortunate and helpless rider.

"Good Heavens!" cried Glumford, who had sat quietly upon his dozing horse, watching the result of the dispute—"what have you done? you have killed his lordship—positively killed him—and his horse, too, I dare say. You shall be hanged for this, sir, as sure as I am a magistrate and that sort of thing."

Unheeding this denunciation, Wolfe had made to the spot where rider and horse lay blent together at the foot of the descent; and assisting the latter to rise, bent down to examine the real effect of his violence. "Methinks," said he, as he looked upon the hueless, but still defying, features of the horseman—"methinks I have seen that face years before—but where? perhaps my dreams have foretold me this."

Lord Ulswater was utterly senseless; and as Wolfe raised him, he saw that the right side of the head was covered with blood, and that one arm seemed crushed and broken. Meanwhile a carriage had appeared—was hailed by Glumford—stopped; and, on being informed of the circumstance, and the rank of the sufferer, the traveller, a single gentleman, descended, assisted to raise the unhappy nobleman—placed him in the carriage, and, obeying Glumford's instructions, proceeded slowly to Westborough Park.

"But the ruffian—the rebel—the murderer!" said Mr. Glumford both querulously and inquiringly, looking towards Wolfe, who, without having attempted to assist his victim, stood aloof, with arms folded, and an expression of sated ferocity upon his speaking features.

"Oh! as to him," quoth the traveller, stepping into his carriage, in order to support the mangled man—"you, sir, and my valet can bring him along with you, or take him to the next town, or do, in short, with him just as you please, only be sure he does not escape—drive on, post-boy, very gently." And poor Mr. Glumford found the muscular form of the stern Wolfe consigned to the sole care of himself and a very diminutive man in pea-green silk stockings, who, however excellently well he might perform the office of valet, was certainly by no means calculated in physical powers for the detention of a criminal.

Wolfe saved the pair a world of trouble and anxiety.

"Sir," said he, gravely turning to Glumford, "you beheld the affray, and, whatever its consequences, will do me the common justice of witnessing as to the fact of the first aggressor: it will, however, be satisfactory to both of us to seize the earliest opportunity of putting the matter upon a legal footing, and I shall, therefore, return to W——, to which town you will doubtless accompany me."

"With all my heart!" cried Mr. Glumford, feeling as if a mountain of responsibility were taken from his breast. "And I wish to Heaven you may be transported instead of hanged."

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CHAPTER LXXIX.

But gasping heaved the breath that Lara drew
And dull the film along his dim eye grew.—BYRON.

THE light broke partially through the half-closed shutters of the room in which lay Lord Ulswater—who, awakened to sense and pain by the motion of the carriage, had now relapsed into insensibility. By the side of the sofa on which he was laid, knelt Clarence, bathing one hand with tears violent and fast; on the opposite side leant over, with bald front, and an expression of mingled fear and sorrow upon his intent countenance, the old steward; while, at a little distance, Lord Westborough, who had been wheeled into the room, sat mute in his chair, aghast with bewilderment and horror, and counting every moment to the arrival of the surgeon, who had been sent for. The stranger to whom the carriage belonged stood by the window, detailing, in a low voice, to the chaplain of the house, what particulars of the occurrence he was acquainted with, while the youngest scion of the family, a boy of about ten years, and who, in the general confusion, had thrust himself unnoticed into the room, stood close to the pair, with open mouth and thirsting ears, and a face on which childish interest at a fearful tale was strongly blent with the more absorbed feeling of terror at the truth.

Slowly Lord Ulswater opened his eyes—they rested upon Clarence.

"My brother—my brother!" cried Clarence in a voice of powerful anguish—"is it thus—thus that you have come hither to—" He stopped in the gushing fulness of his heart. Extricating from Clarence the only hand he was able to use, Lord Ulswater raised it to his brow, as if in the effort to clear remembrance; and then, turning to Wardour, seemed to ask the truth of Clarence's claim—at least so the old man interpreted the meaning of his eye, and the faint and scarce intelligible words which broke from his lips.

"It is—it is, my honored lord," cried he, struggling with his emotion—"it is your brother—your lost brother, Clinton L'Estrange." And as he said these words, Clarence felt the damp chill hand of his brother press his own, and knew by that pressure and the smile—kind, though brief from exceeding pain—with which the ill-fated nobleman looked upon him, that the claim long unknown was at last acknowledged, and the ties long broken united, though in death.

The surgeon arrived—the room was cleared of all but Clarence—the first examination was sufficient. Unaware of Clarence's close relationship to the sufferer, the surgeon took him aside—"A very painful operation," said he, "might be performed, but it would only torture, in vain, the last moments of the patient; no human skill can save, or even protract his life."

The doomed man who, though in great pain, was still sensible, stirred. His brother flew towards him. "Flora," he murmured, "let me see *her*, I implore."

Curbing, as much as he was able, his emotion, and conquering his reluctance to leave the sufferer even for a moment, Clarence flew in search of Lady Flora. He found her: in rapid and hasty words, he signified the wish of the dying man, and hurried her, confused, trembling, and scarce conscious of the melancholy scene she was about to witness, to the side of her affianced bridegroom.

I have been by the death-beds of many men, and I have noted that shortly before death, as the frame grows weaker and weaker, the fiercer passions yield to those feelings better harmonizing with the awfulness of the hour. Thoughts soft and tender, which seemed little to belong to the character in the health and vigor of former years, obtain then an empire, brief, indeed, but utter for the time they last—and this is the more impressive, because, (as in the present instance I shall have occasion to portray) in the moments which succeed and make *the very* latest of life, the ruling passion, suppressed for an interval by such gentler feelings, sometimes again returns to take its final triumph over that frail clay, which, through existence, it has swayed, agitated and moulded like wax unto its will.

When Lord Ulswater saw Flora approach and bend weepingly over him, a momentary softness stole over his face. Taking her hand, he extended it towards Clarence; and, turning to the latter, faltered out—"Let this—my—brother—atone—for——;" apparently unable to finish the sentence, he then relaxed his hold and sunk upon the pillow: and so still, so apparently breathless, did he remain for several

minutes, that they thought the latest agony was over.

As, yielding to this impression, Clarence was about to withdraw the scarce conscious Flora from the chamber, words, less tremulous and indistinct than aught which he had yet uttered broke from Lord Ulswater's lips. Clarence hastened to him; and, bending over his countenance, saw that, even through the rapid changes and shades of death, it darkened with the peculiar characteristics of the unreleased soul within:—the brow was knit into more than its wonted sternness and pride; and in the eye, which glared upon the opposite wall, the light of the waning life broke into a momentary blaze—that flash, so rapid and evanescent, before the air drinks in the last spark of the being it has animated, and night—the starless and eternal—falls over the extinguished lamp! The hand of the right arm (which was that unshattered by the fall) was clenched and raised; but, when the words which came upon Clarence's ear had ceased, it fell heavily by his side, like a clod of that clay which it had then become. In those words, it seemed as if, in the confused delirium of passing existence, the brave soldier mingled some dim and bewildered recollection of former battles, with that of his last most fatal, though most ignoble strife.

"Down, down with them," he muttered between his teeth, though in a tone startlingly deep and audible; "down with them. No quarter to the infidels—strike for England and Effingham. Ha!—who strives for flight there!—kill him—no mercy, I say—none!—there—there—I have despatched him—ha!—ha!—What, still alive?—off, slave, off!—Oh, slain—slain in a ditch, by a base-born hind—oh—bitter—bitter—bitter!" And with these words, of which the last, from their piercing anguish and keen despair, made a dread contrast with the fire and defiance of the first, the jaw fell—the flashing and fierce eye glazed and set—and all of the haughty and bold patrician which the earth retained was—dust!

CHAPTER LXXX.

Il n'est jamais permis de détériorer une âme humaine pour l'avantage des autres, ni de faire un célérat pour le service des honnêtes gens.*—ROUSSEAU.

As the reader approaches the termination of this narrative, and looks back upon the many scenes he has passed, perhaps, in the mimic representation of human life, he may find no unfaithful resemblance to the true.

As, amongst the crowd of characters jostled against each other in their course, some drop off at the first, the second, or the third stage, and leave a few only continuing to the last, while Fate chooses her agents and survivors among those whom the by-stander, perchance, least noticed as the objects of her selection—and they who, haply, seemed to him, at first, among the most conspicuous as characters, sink, some abruptly, some gradully, into actors of the least importance in events; as the reader notes the same passion, in different strata, producing the most opposite qualities, and gathers from that notice some estimate of the vast perplexity in the code of morals, deemed by the shallow so plain a science, when he finds that a similar and single feeling will produce both the virtue we love and the vice we detest, the magnanimity we admire and the meanness we despise; as the feeble hands of the author force into contrast ignorance and wisdom, the affectation of philosophy and its true essence, coarseness and refinement, the lowest vulgarity of sentiment with an exaltation of feeling approaching to morbidity, the reality of virtue with the counterfeit, the glory of the Divinity with the hideousness of the Idol, sorrow and eager joy, marriage and death, tears and their young successors, smiles; as all, blent together, these varieties of life form a single yet many-colored web, leaving us to doubt whether, in fortune the bright hue or the dark—in character, the base material or the rich, predominate—the workman of the web could almost reconcile himself to his glaring and great deficiency in art, by the fond persuasion that he has, at least in his choice of tint and texture, caught something of the likeness of Nature: but he knows, to the abasement of his vanity, that these enumerated particulars of resemblance to life, are common to all, even to

* It is not permitted us to degrade one single soul for the sake of conferring advantage on others, nor to make a rogue, for the good of the honest.

the most unskilful of his brethren; and it is not the mere act of copying a true original, but the rare circumstance of force and accuracy in the copy, which can alone constitute a just pretension to merit, or flatter the artist with the hope of a moderate success.

The news of Lord Ulswater's untimely death, soon spread around the neighborhood, and was conveyed to Mordaunt by the very gentleman whom that nobleman had charged with his hostile message. Algernon repaired at once to W——, to gather from Wolfe some less exaggerated account of the affray than that which the many tongues of Rumor had brought to him.

It was no difficult matter to see the precise share of blame to be attached to Wolfe; and, notwithstanding the biassed account of Glumford, and the strong spirit of party then existing in the country, no rational man could, for a moment, term the event of a sudden fray a premeditated murder, or the violence of the aggrieved the black offence of a wilful criminal. Wolfe, therefore, soon obtained a release from the confinement to which he had been first committed; and, with a temper still more exasperated by the evident disposition of his auditors to have treated him, had it been possible, with the utmost rigor, he returned to companions well calculated, by their converse and bent of mind, to inflame the fester of his moral constitution.

It happens, generally, that men very vehement in any particular opinion choose their friends, not for a general similarity of character, but in proportion to their mutual congeniality of sentiment upon that particular opinion; it happens, also, that those most *audibly* violent, if we may so speak, upon *any* opinion, moral or political, are rarely the wisest or the purest of their party. Those with whom Wolfe was intimate were men who shared none of the nobler characteristics of the republican; still less did they participate, or even comprehend, the enlightened and benevolent views for which the wise and great men of that sect—a sect to which all philanthropy is, perhaps too fondly, inclined to lean—have been so conspicuously eminent. On the contrary, Wolfe's comrades, without education, and consequently without principle, had been driven to disaffection, by desperate fortunes and ruined reputations, acting upon minds polluted by the ignorance, and hardened among the dross of the populace. But the worst can, by constant intercourse, corrupt the best; and the barriers of good and evil, often confused in Wolfe's mind by the blindness of his passions, seemed, as his intercourse with these lawless and ruffian associates thickened, to be at last utterly broken down and swept away.

Unhappily too—soon after Wolfe's return to London—the popular irritation showed itself in mobs, perhaps rather to be termed disorderly than seditious; the ministers, however, thought otherwise; the military were summoned, and much injury, resulting, it is to be hoped, from accident, not design, ensued to many of the persons assembled. Some were severely wounded by the swords of the soldiers—others maimed and trampled upon by the horses, which shared the agitation or irritability of their riders; and a few, among whom were two women and three children, lost their lives. Wolfe had been one of the crowd—and the scene, melancholy as it really was, and appearing to his temper unredeemed and inexcusable on the part of the soldiers—left on his mind a deep and burning impression of revenge. Justice (as they termed it) was demanded by strong bodies of the people upon the soldiers; but the administration deeming it politic rather to awe than to conciliate, so far from censuring the military, approved their exertions.

From that time, Wolfe appears to have resolved upon the execution of a design, which he had long imperfectly and confusedly meditated.

This was no less a crime (and to him did conscientiously seem no less a virtue), than to seize a favorable opportunity for assassinating the most prominent member of the administration, and the one who, above all the rest, was the most odious to the disaffected. It must be urged, in extenuation of the atrocity of this design, that a man perpetually brooding over one scheme, which to him has become the very sustenance of existence, and which scheme, perpetually frustrated, grows desperate by disappointment, acquires a heat of morbid and oblique enthusiasm, which may not be unreasonably termed insanity; and that, at the very time Wolfe reconciled it to his conscience to commit the murder of his fellow creature, he would have moved out of his path for a worm. Assassination, indeed, seemed to him justice; and a felon's ex-

ecution the glory of martyrdom. And yet, O Fanatic, thou didst anathematize the Duellist as the Man of blood—what is the Assassin?

CHAPTER LXXXI.

And thou that, silent at my knee,
Dost lift to mine thy soft, dark, earnest eyes,
Fill'd with the love of childhood, which I see
Pure through its depths—a thing without disguise.
Thou that hast breathed in slumber on my breast,
When I have check'd its throbs to give thee rest,
Mine own, whose young thoughts fresh before me rise,
Is it not much that I may guide thy prayer,
And circle thy young soul with free and healthful air.
—HEMANS.

THE events we have recorded, from the time of Clarence's visit to Mordaunt to the death of Lord Ulswater, took place within little more than a week. We have now to pass in silence over several weeks: and as it was the commencement of autumn when we introduced Clarence and Mordaunt to our reader, so it is the first opening of winter in which we will resume the thread of our narration.

Mordaunt had removed to London; and, although he had not yet taken any share in public business, he was only watching the opportunity to commence a career, the brilliancy of which, those who knew aught of his mind, began already to foretell. But he mixed little, if at all, with the gayer occupants of the world's prominent places. Absorbed alternately in his studies and his labors of good, the halls of pleasure were seldom visited by his presence: and they who, in the crowd, knew nothing of him but his name, and the lofty bearing of his mien, recoiled from the coldness of his exterior, and, while they marvelled at his retirement and reserve, saw in both but the moroseness of the student, and the gloom of the misanthropist.

But the nobleness of his person—the antiquity of his birth—his wealth, his unblemished character, and the interest thrown over his name, by the reputation of talent, and the unpenetrated mystery of his life, all powerfully spoke in his favor to those of the gentler sex, who judge us not only from what we are to others, but from what they imagine we can be to them. From such allurements, however, as from all else, the mourner turned only the more deeply to cherish the memory of the dead; and it was a touching and holy sight to mark the mingled excess of melancholy and fondness with which he watched over that treasure in whose young beauty and guileless heart, his departed Isabel had yet left the resemblance of her features and her love. There seemed between them to exist even a dearer and closer tie than that of daughter and sire; for, in both, the objects which usually divide the affections of the man or the child, had but a feeble charm: Isabel's mind had expanded beyond her years, and Algernon's had outgrown his time; so that neither the sports natural to her age, nor the ambition ordinary to his, were sufficient to wean or to distract the unity of their love. When, after absence, his well-known step trod lightly in the hall, her ear, which had listened, and longed, and thirsted for the sound, taught her fairy feet to be the first to welcome his return; and when the slightest breath of sickness menaced her slender frame, it was his hand that smoothed her pillow, and his smile that cheered away her pain; and when she sunk into sleep, she knew that a father's heart watched over her through the long but untiring night—that a father's eye would be the first which, on waking, she would meet.

"Oh! beautiful, and rare as beautiful," was that affection; in the parent no earthlier or harder sternness in authority, nor weakness in doting, nor caprice in love—in the child no fear debasing reverence, yet no familiarity diminishing respect. But Love, whose pride is in serving, seemed to make at once soft and hallowed the offices mutually rendered—and Nature, never counteracted in her dictates, wrought, without a visible effort, the proper channels into which those offices should flow; and that Charity, which not only covers sins, but lifts the veil from virtues, whose beauty might otherwise have lain concealed, linked them closer and closer, and threw over that link the sanctity of itself. For it was Algernon's sweetest pleasure to make her young hands the ministers of good to others and to drink, at such times, from the rich glow of her angel countenance, the purified selfishness of his reward. And when after the divine joy of *blessing*, which, perhaps, the youngest taste yet more vividly than their sires, she threw her arms around his neck, and thanked him with

glad tears for the luxury he had bestowed upon her, how could they, in that gushing outflow of heart, help loving each other the more, or feeling, that in that love there was something which justified the excess?

Nor have we drawn with too exaggerating a pencil, nor, though Isabel's *mind* was older than her years, extended that prematureness to her *heart*. For, where we set the example of benevolence, and see that the example is in nought corrupted, the milk of human kindness will flow not the least readily from the youngest breast, and out of the mouths of babes will come the wisdom of charity and love!

Ever since Mordaunt's arrival in town, he had sought out Wolfe's abode, for the purpose of ministering to the poverty under which he rightly conjectured that the republican labored. But the habitation of one, needy, distressed, seldom living long in one place, and far less notorious of late than he had formerly been, was not easy to discover; nor was it till after long and vain search that he ascertained the retreat of his singular acquaintance. The day in which he effected this object we shall have hereafter occasion to specify. Meanwhile we return to Mr. Crauford.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

> Plot on thy little hour, and skein on skein
> Weave the vain mesh, in which thy subtle soul
> Broods on its venom! Lo! behind, before,
> Around thee, like an armament of cloud,
> The black Fate labors onward!—ANON.

THE dusk of a winter's evening gathered over a room in Crauford's house in town, only relieved from the closing darkness by an expiring and sullen fire, beside which Mr. Bradley sat, with his feet upon the fender, apparently striving to coax some warmth into the icy palms of his spread hands. Crauford himself was walking up and down the room with a changeful step, and ever and anon glancing his bright, shrewd eye at the partner of his fraud, who, seemingly unconscious of the observation he underwent, appeared to occupy his attention solely with the difficulty of warming his meagre and withered frame.

"Ar'n't you very cold there, sir?" said Bradley, after a long pause, and pushing himself farther into the verge of the dying embers, —"may I not ring for some more coals?"

"Hell and the ——: I beg your pardon, my good Bradley, but you vex me beyond patience: how can you think of such trifles when our very lives are in so imminent a danger?"

"I beg your pardon, my honored benefactor, they are indeed in danger!"

"Bradley, we have but one hope—fidelity to each other. If we persist in the same story, not a tittle can be brought home to us—not a tittle, my good Bradley; and though our characters may be a little touched, why, what is a character? Shall we eat less, drink less, enjoy less, when we have lost it? Not a whit. No, my friend, we will go abroad: leave it to me to save from the wreck of our fortunes enough to live upon like princes."

"If not like *peers*, my honored benefactor."

"'Sdeath!—yes, yes, very good—he! he! he! if not peers. Well, all happiness is in the senses, and Richard Crauford has as many senses as Viscount Innisdale; but had we been able to protract inquiry another week, Bradley, why, I would have been my Lord, and you, Sir John."

"You bear your losses like a hero, sir," said Mr. Bradley.

"To be sure; there *is* no loss, man, but life —none; let us preserve that—and it will be our own fault if we don't—and the devil take all the rest. But bless me, it grows late, and, at all events, we are safe for some hours; the inquiry won't take place till twelve to-morrow, why should we not feast till twelve to-night. Ring, my good fellow, dinner must be nearly ready."

"Why, honored sir," said Bradley, "I want to go home to see my wife, and arrange my house. Who knows but I may sleep in Newgate to-morrow?"

Crauford, who had been still walking, to and fro, stopped abruptly at this speech, and his eye, even through the gloom, shot out a livid and fierce light, before which the timid and humble glance of Mr. Bradley quailed in an instant.

"Go home!—no, my friend, no, I can't part with you to-night, no, not for an instant. I have many lessons to give you. How are we to learn our parts for to-morrow, if we don't rehearse them beforehand? Do you not know that a single blunder may turn what

I hope will be a farce, into a tragedy? Go home!—pooh, pooh—why, man, I have not seen *my* wife, nor put *my* house to rights, and if you do but listen to me, I tell you again and again that not a hair of our heads can be touched."

"You know best, honored sir; I bow to your decision."

"Bravo, honest Brad! and now for dinner. I have the most glorious champagne that ever danced in foam to your lip. No counsellor like the bottle, believe me!"

And the servant entering to announce dinner, Crauford took Bradley's arm and leaning affectionately upon it, passed through an obsequious and liveried row of domestics to a room blazing with light and plate. A noble fire was the first thing which revived Bradley's spirit, and, as he spread his hands over it before he sat down to the table, he surveyed, with a gleam of gladness upon his thin cheeks, two vases of glittering metal formerly the boast of a king, in which were immersed the sparkling genii of the grape.

Crauford, always a *gourmand*, eat with unusual appetite, and pressed the wine upon Bradley with an eager hospitality, which soon somewhat clouded the senses of the worthy man. The dinner was removed, the servants retired, and the friends were left alone.

"A pleasant trip to France?" cried Crauford, filling a bumper. "That's the land for hearts like ours. I tell you what, little Brad, we will leave our wives behind us, and take, with a new country, and new names, a new lease of life. What will it signify to men making love at Paris what fools say of them in London? Another bumper, honest Brad—a bumper to the girls! What say you to that, eh?"

"Lord, sir, your are so facetious—so witty! It must be owned that a black eye is a great temptation—Lira-lira, la-la!" And Mr. Bradley's own eyes rolled joyously.

"Bravo, Brad!—a song, a song! but treason to King Burgundy! Your glass is—"

"Empty, honored sir, I know it!—Lira-lira la!—but it is easily filled! We who have all our lives been pouring from one vessel into another, know how to keep it up to the last!

"Courage then, cries the knight, we may yet be forgiven,
Or at worst buy the bishop's reversion in heaven;
Our frequent escapes in this world show how true 'tis,
That gold is the only *Elixir Salutis*.
Derry down, derry down.

All you, who to swindling conveniently creep,
Ne'er piddle—by thousands the treasury sweep,
Your safety depends on the weight of the sum,
For no rope was yet made that could tie up a plum.
Derry down, etc." *

"Bravissimo, little Brad!—you are quite a wit! See what it is to have one's faculties called out. Come, a toast to old England, the land in which no man ever wants a farthing who has wit to steal it—'Old England for ever!'—your rogue is your only true patriot!"—and Crauford poured the remainder of the bottle, nearly three parts full, into a beaker, which he pushed to Bradley. That convivial gentleman emptied it at a draught, and, faltering out, "Honest Sir John—room for my Lady Bradley's carriage," dropped down on the floor insensible.

Crauford rose instantly, satisfied himself that the intoxication was genuine, and, giving the lifeless body a kick of contemptuous disgust, left the room, muttering—"The dull ass, did he think it was on his back that I was going to ride off!—He!—he!—he! But stay, let me feel my pulse. Too fast by twenty strokes! One's never sure of the mind if one does not regulate the body to a hair! Drank too much—must take a powder before I start."

Mounting by a back staircase to his bedroom, Crauford unlocked a chest, took out a bundle of clerical clothes, a large shovel hat, and a huge wig. Hastily, but not carelessly, indueing himself in these articles of disguise, he then proceeded to stain his fair cheeks with a preparation which soon gave them a swarthy hue. Putting his own clothes in the chest, which he carefully locked (placing the key in his pocket), he next took from a desk on his dressing-table a purse; opening this, he extracted a diamond of great size and immense value, which, years before, in preparation of the event that had now taken place, he had purchased.

His usual sneer curled his lip as he gazed at it. "Now," said he, "is it not strange that this little stone should supply the mighty wants of that grasping thing, man! Who talks of religion, country, wife, children? This petty mineral can purchase them all! Oh, what a

* From a ballad called "The Knight and the Prelate."

bright joy speaks out in your white cheek, my beauty! What are all human charms to yours? Why, by your spell, most magical of talismans, my years may walk, gloating and revelling, through a lane of beauties, till they fall into the grave! Pish!—that grave is an ugly thought—a very, very ugly thought! But come, my sun of hope, I must eclipse you for a while! Type of myself—while you hide, I hide also; and when I once more let you forth to the day, *then* shine out Richard Crauford—shine out!" So saying, he sewed the diamond carefully in the folds of his shirt; and re-arranging his dress, took the cooling powder, which he weighed out to a grain, with a scrupulous and untrembling hand—descended the back stairs—opened the door, and found himself in the open street.

The clock struck ten as he entered a hackney-coach and drove to another part of London. "What, so late!" thought he: "I must be at Dover in twelve hours—the vessel sails then. Humph!—some danger yet! What a pity that I could not trust that fool. He!—he!—he!—what will he think to-morrow, when he wakes and finds that only *one* is destined to swing!"

The hackney-coach stopped, according to his direction, at an inn in the city. Here Crauford asked if a note had been left for Dr. Stapylton. One (written by himself) was given to him. "Merciful Heaven!" cried the false doctor, as he read it, "my daughter is on a bed of death!"

The landlord's look wore anxiety—the doctor seemed for a moment paralyzed by silent woe. He recovered, shook his head piteously, and ordered a post-chaise and four on to Canterbury without delay.

"It is an ill wind that blows nobody good!" thought the landlord, as he issued the order into the yard.

The chaise was soon out—the doctor entered—off went the post-boys—and Richard Crauford, feeling his diamond, turned his thoughts to safety and to France.

A little, unknown man, who had been sitting at the bar for the last two hours, sipping brandy and water, and who, from his extreme taciturnity and quiet, had been scarcely observed, now rose. "Landlord," said he, "do you know who that gentleman is?"

"Why," quoth Boniface, "the letter to him was directed, 'For the Rev. Dr. Stapylton——will be called for.'"

"Ah!" said the little man, yawning—"I shall have a long night's work of it—Have you another chaise and four in the yard?"

"To be sure, sir, to be sure!" cried the landlord in astonishment.

"Out with it, then! Another glass of brandy and water—a little stronger—no sugar!"

The landlord stared—the bar-maid stared—even the head-waiter, a very stately person, stared too.

"Harkye," said the little man, sipping his brandy and water, "I am a deuced good-natured fellow, so I'll make you a great man to-night; for nothing makes a man so great as being let into a great secret. Did you ever hear of the rich Mr. Crauford?"

"Certainly—who has not?"

"Did you ever see him?"

"No! I can't say I ever did."

"You lie, landlord—you saw him to-night."

"Sir," cried the landlord, bristling up.

The little man pulled out a brace of pistols, and very quietly began priming them out of a small powder-flask.

The landlord started back—the head-waiter cried "rape," and the barmaid "murder."

"Who the devil are you, sir?" cried the landlord.

"Mr. Tickletrout, the celebrated officer—thief-taker, as they call it. Have a care, Ma'am, the pistols are loaded. I see the chaise is out—there's the reckoning, landlord."

"O Lord? I'm sure I don't want any reckoning—too great an honor for my poor house to be favored with your company; but (following the little man to the door) whom did you please to say you were going to catch?"

"Mr. Crauford, alias Dr. Stapylton."

"Lord! Lord!—to think of it—how shocking! What has he done?"

"Swindled, I believe."

"My eyes! And why, sir, did not you catch him when he was in the bar?"

"Because then I should not have got paid for my journey to Dover. Shut the door, boy; first stage on to Canterbury."

And, drawing a woölen night-cap over his ears, Mr. Tickletrout resigned himself to his nocturnal excursion.

On the very day on which the patent for his

peerage was to have been made out—on the very day on which he had afterwards calculated on reaching Paris—on that very day was Mr. Richard Crauford lodged in Newgate, fully committed for a trial of life and death.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

There, if, O gentle love! I read aright
The utterance that sealed thy sacred bond:
'Twas listening to those accents of delight
She hid upon his breast those eyes—beyond
Expression's power to paint—all languishingly fond.
—CAMPBELL.

"AND you will positively leave us for London," said Lady Flora, tenderly—"and to-morrow, too!" This was said to one who, under the name of Clarence Linden, has played the principal part in our drama, and who now, by the death of his brother, succeeding to the honors of his house, we present to our reader as Clinton L'Estrange, Earl of Ulswater.

They were alone in the memorable pavilion; and though it was winter, the sun shone cheerily into the apartment; and through the door, which was left partly open, the evergreens, contrasting with the leafless boughs of the oak and beech, could be just descried, furnishing the lover with some meet simile of love, and deceiving the eyes of those willing to be deceived with a resemblance to the departed summer. The unusual mildness of the day seemed to operate genially upon the birds—those children of light and song; and they grouped blithely beneath the window and round the door, where the hand of the kind young spirit of the place had so often ministered to their wants. Every now and then, too, you might hear the shrill glad note of the blackbird keeping measure to his swift and low flight, and sometimes a vagrant hare from the neighboring preserves sauntered fearlessly by the half-shut door, secure, from long experience, of an asylum in the vicinity of one who had drawn from the breast of Nature a tenderness and love for all its offspring.

Her lover sat at Flora's feet; and, looking upward, seemed to seek out the fond and melting eyes which, too conscious of their secret, turned bashfully from his gaze. He had drawn her arm over his shoulder; and clasping that small and snowy hand, which, long coveted with a miser's desire, was at length won, he pressed upon it a thousand kisses—sweeter beguilers of time than even words. All had been long explained—the space between their hearts annihilated—doubt, anxiety, misconstruction, those clouds of love, had passed away, and left not a wreck to obscure its heaven.

"And you will leave us to-morrow—must it be to-morrow?"

"Ah! Flora, it must; but see, I have your lock of hair—your beautiful, dark hair, to kiss, when I am away from you, and I shall have your letters, dearest—a letter every day; and oh! more than all, I shall have the hope, the certainty, that when we meet again, you will be mine for ever."

"And I, too, must, by seeing it in your hand-writing learn to reconcile myself to your new name. Ah! I wish you had been still Clarence—only Clarence. Wealth, rank, power—what are all these but rivals to poor Flora?"

Lady Flora sighed, and the next moment blushed; and, what with the sigh and the blush, Clarence's lip wandered from the hand to the cheek, and thence to a mouth on which the west wind seemed to have left the sweets of a thousand summers.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

A Hounsditch man, one of the devil's near kinsmen—a broker.—*Every Man in his Humor.*

We have here discovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth. —*Much Ado about Nothing.*

IT was an evening of mingled rain and wind, the hour about nine, when Mr. Morris Brown, under the shelter of that admirable umbrella of sea-green silk, to which we have before had the honor to summon the attention of our readers, was, after a day of business, plodding homeward his weary way. The obscure streets through which his course was bent were at no time very thickly thronged, and at the present hour the inclemency of the night rendered them utterly deserted. It is true that now and then a solitary female, holding up, with one hand, garments already piteously bedraggled, and with the other thrusting her umbrella in the very teeth of the hostile winds. might be seen crossing the intersected streets, and

vanishing amid the subterranean recesses of some kitchen area, or tramping onward amidst the mazes of the metropolitan labyrinth, till, like the cuckoo, "heard," but no longer "seen," the echo of her retreating pattens made a dying music to the reluctant ear; or indeed, at intervals of unfrequent occurrence, a hackney vehicle jolted, rumbling, bumping over the uneven stones, as if groaning forth its gratitude to the elements for which it was indebted for its fare. Sometimes also a chivalrous gallant of the feline species ventured its delicate paws upon the streaming pavement, and shook, with a small but dismal cry, the rain-drops from the pyramidal roofs of its tender ears.

But, save these occasional infringements on its empire, solitude, dark, comfortless, and unrelieved, fell around the creaking footsteps of Mr. Morris Brown. "I wish," soliloquized the worthy broker, "that I had been able advantageously to dispose of this cursed umbrella of the late Lady Waddilove; it is very little calculated for any but a single lady of slender shape, and though it certainly keeps the rain off my hat, it only sends it with a double dripping upon my shoulders. Pish, deuce take the umbrella, I shall catch my death of cold."

These complaints of an affliction that was assuredly sufficient to irritate the naturally sweet temper of Mr. Brown, only ceased, as that industrious personage paused at the corner of the street, for the purpose of selecting the dryest part through which to effect the miserable act of crossing to the opposite side. Occupied in stretching his neck over the kennel, in order to take the fullest survey of its topography which the scanty and agitated lamps would allow, the unhappy wanderer, lowering his umbrella, suffered a cross and violent gust of wind to rush, as if on purpose, against the interior. The rapidity with which this was done, and the sudden impetus, which gave to the inflated silk the force of a balloon, happening to occur exactly at the moment Mr. Brown was stooping with such wistful anxiety over the pavement, that gentleman, to his inexpressible dismay, was absolutely lifted, as it were, from his present footing, and immersed in a running rivulet of liquid mire, which flowed immediately below the pavement. Nor was this all—for the wind, finding itself somewhat imprisoned in the narrow receptacle it had thus abruptly entered, made so strenuous an exertion to extricate itself, that it turned Lady Waddilove's memorable relic utterly inside out; so that when Mr. Brown, aghast at the calamity of his immersion, lifted his eyes to heaven, with a devotion that had in it more of expostulation than submission, he beheld, by the melancholy lamps, the apparition of his umbrella, the exact opposite to its legitimate conformation, and seeming, with its lengthy stick, and inverted summit, the actual and absolute resemblance of a gigantic wine-glass.

"Now," said Mr. Brown, with that ironical bitterness so common to intense despair, "now, that's what I call pleasant."

As if the elements were guided and set on by all the departed souls of those whom Mr. Brown had, at any time, over-reached in his profession, scarcely had the afflicted broker uttered this brief sentence, before a discharge of rain, tenfold more heavy than any which had yet fallen, tumbled down in literal torrents upon the defenceless head of the itinerant.

"This won't do," said Mr. Brown, plucking up courage, and splashing out of the little rivulet, once more into *terra firma*, "this won't do—I must find a shelter somewhere.—Dear, dear, how the wet runs down me. I am for all the world like the famous dripping well in Derbyshire. What a beast of an umbrella!—I'll never buy one again of an old lady—hang me if I do."

As the miserable Morris uttered these sentences, which gushed out, one by one, in a broken stream of complaint, he looked round and round—before—behind—beside—for some temporary protection or retreat. In vain—the uncertainty of the light only allowed him to discover houses, in which no portico extended its friendly shelter, and where even the doors seemed divested of the narrow ledge wherewith they are, in more civilized quarters, ordinarily crowned.

"I shall certainly have the rheumatism all this winter," said Mr. Brown, hurrying onward as fast as he was able. Just then, glancing desperately down a narrow lane, which crossed his path, he perceived the scaffolding of a house, in which repair or alteration had been at work. A ray of hope flashed across him; he redoubled his speed, and, entering the welcome haven, found himself entirely protected

from the storm. The extent of scaffolding was, indeed, rather considerable; and, though the extreme narrowness of the lane, and the increasing gloom of the night, left Mr. Brown in almost total darkness, so that he could not perceive the exact peculiarities of his situation, yet he was perfectly satisfied with the shelter he had obtained; and after shaking the rain from his hat—squeezing his coat sleeves and lappets, satisfying himself that it was only about the shoulders that he was thoroughly wetted, and thrusting two pocket-handkerchiefs between his shirt and his skin, as preventives to the dreaded rheumatism, Mr. Brown leant luxuriously back against the wall in the farthest corner of his retreat, and busied himself with endeavoring to restore his insulted umbrella to its original utility of shape.

Our wanderer had been about three minutes in this situation, when he heard the voices of two men, who were hastening along the lane.

"But do stop," said one; and these were the first words distinctly audible to the ear of Mr. Brown—"do stop, the rain can't last much longer, and we have a long way yet to go."

"No, no," said the other, in a voice more imperious than the first, which was evidently plebeian, and somewhat foreign in its tone, "no, we have no time. What signify the inclemencies of weather to men feeding upon an inward and burning thought, and made, by the workings of the mind, almost callous to the contingencies of the frame?"

"Nay, my very good friend," said the first speaker with positive, though not disrespectful, earnestness, "that may be all very fine for you, who have a constitution like a horse; but I am quite a—what call you it—an invalid—eh! and have a devilish cough ever since I have been in this d—d country—beg your pardon, no offence to it—so I shall just step under cover of this scaffolding for a few minutes, and if you like the rain so much, my very good friend, why there is plenty of room in the lane too—(ugh—ugh—ugh) to enjoy it."

As the speaker ended, the dim light, just faintly glimmering at the entrance of the friendly shelter, was obscured by his shadow, and, presently afterwards, his companion joining him, said—

"Well, if it must be so; but how can you be fit to brave all the perils of our scheme, when you shrink, like a palsied crone, from the sprinkling of a few water-drops?"

"A few water-*drops*, my very good friend," answered the other, "a few—what call you them — ay — water-*falls* rather—(ugh—ugh); but let me tell you, my brother citizen, that a man may not like to get his skin wet with water, and would yet thrust his arm up to the very elbow in blood!—(ugh—ugh.)"

"The devil!" mentally ejaculated Mr. Brown, who, at the word "scheme," had advanced one step from his retreat, but who now, at the last words of the intruder, drew back as gently as a snail into his shell; and although his person was far too much enveloped in shade to run the least chance of detection, yet the honest broker began to feel a little tremor vibrate along the chords of his thrilling frame, and a new anathema against the fatal umbrella rise to his lips.

"Ah!" quoth the second, "I trust that it may be so; but to return to our project—are you quite sure that these two indentical ministers are in the *regular* habit of *walking* homeward from that parliament which their despotism has so degraded?"

"Sure—ay, that I am; Davidson swears to it!"

"And you are also sure of their persons, so that, even in the dusk, you can recognize them? for, you know, I have never seen them."

"Sure as five-pence!" returned the first speaker, to whose mind the lives of the persons referred to were of considerable less value than the sum elegantly specified in his metaphorical reply.

"Then," said the other, with a deep, stern determination of tone—"then shall this hand, by which one of the proudest of our oppressors has already fallen, be made a still worthier instrument of the wrath of Heaven!"

"You are a d—d pretty shot, I believe," quoth the first speaker, as indifferently as if he were praising the address of a Norfolk squire.

"Never yet did my eye misguide me, or my aim swerve a hair's breadth from its target! I thought once, when I learnt the art as a boy, that in battle, rather than in the execution of a single criminal, that skill would avail me."

"Well, we shall have a glorious opportunity to-morrow night?" answered the first speaker; "that is, if it does not rain so infernally as

it does this night: but we shall have a watch of many hours, I dare say."

"That matters but little," replied the other conspirator; "nor even if, night after night, the same vigil is renewed and baffled, so that it bring its reward at last."

"Right," quoth the first; "I long to be at it!—ugh! ugh!—what a confounded cough I have: it will be my death soon, I'm thinking."

"If so," said the other, with a solemnity which seemed ludicrously horrible, from the strange contrast of the words and object—"die at least with the sanctity of a brave and noble deed upon your conscience and your name!"

"Ugh! ugh!—I am but a man of color, but I am a patriot, for all that, my good friend! See, the violence of the rain has ceased; we will proceed:" and with these words the worthy pair left the place to darkness and Mr. Brown.

"O, Lord!" said the latter, stepping forth, and throwing, as it were, in that exclamation, a whole weight of suffocating emotion from his chest—"what bloody miscreants! Murder his Majesty's ministers!—'shoot them like pigeons!'—'d—d pretty shot!' indeed. O Lord! what *would* the late Lady Waddilove, who always hated even the Whigs so cordially, say, if she were alive! But how providential that I should have been here; who knows but I may save the lives of the whole administration, and get a pension, or a little place in the post-office! I'll go to the prime minister directly—this very minute! Pish! i'n't you right now, you cursed thing?" upbraiding the umbrella, which, half-right and half-wrong, seemed endued with an instinctive obstinacy for the sole purpose of tormenting its owner.

However, losing this petty affliction in the greatness of his present determination, Mr. Brown issued out of his lair, and hastened to put his benevolent and loyal intentions into effect.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

When laurelled ruffians die, the Heaven and Earth,
And the deep Air give warning. Shall the good
Perish and not a sign!—ANON.

IT was the evening after the event recorded in our last chapter: all was hushed and dark in the room where Mordaunt sat alone, the low and falling embers burnt dull in the grate, and through the unclosed windows the high stars rode pale and wan in their career. The room, situated at the back of the house, looked over a small garden, where the sickly and hoar shrubs, overshadowed by a few wintry poplars and grim firs, saddened in the dense atmosphere of fog and smoke, which broods over our island city. An air of gloom hung comfortless and chilling over the whole scene externally and within. The room itself was large and old, and its far extremities, mantled as they were with dusk and shadow, impressed upon the mind that involuntary and vague sensation, not altogether unmixed with awe, which the eye, resting upon a view that it can but dimly and confusedly define, so frequently communicates to the heart. There was a strange oppression at Mordaunt's breast, with which he in vain endeavored to contend. Ever and anon, an icy but passing chill, like the shivers of a fever, shot through his veins, and a wild and unearthly and objectless awe stirred through his hair, and his eyes filled with a glassy and cold dew, and sought, as by a self-impulse, the shadowy and unpenetrated places around, which momently grew darker and darker. Little addicted by his peculiar habits to an over-indulgence of the imagination, and still less accustomed to those absolute conquests of the physical frame over the mental, which seem the usual sources of that feeling we call presentiment, Mordaunt rose, and walking to and fro along the room, endeavored by the exercise to restore to his veins their wonted and healthful circulation. It was past the hour in which his daughter retired to rest; but he was often accustomed to steal up to her chamber, and watch her in her young slumbers; and he felt this night a more than usual desire to perform that office of love: so he left the room and ascended the stairs. It was a large old house that he tenanted. The staircase was broad, and lighted from above by a glass dome; and as he slowly ascended, and the stars gleamed down still and ghastly upon his steps, he fancied—but he knew not why—that there was an omen in their gleam. He entered the young Isabel's chamber; there was a light burning within; he stole to her bed, and putting aside the curtain, felt, as he looked upon her peaceful and pure beauty, a cheer-

ing warmth gather round his heart. How lovely is the sleep of childhood! What worlds of sweet, yet not utterly sweet, associations, does it not mingle with the envy of our gaze! What thoughts, and hopes, and cares, and forebodings does it not excite! There lie in that yet ungrieved and unsullied heart what unnumbered sources of emotion! what deep fountains of passion and woe! Alas! whatever be its earlier triumphs, the victim must fall at last! As the hart which the jackals pursue, the moment its race is begun, the human prey is foredoomed for destruction, not by the *single* sorrow, but the *thousand* cares; it may baffle one race of pursuers, but a new succeeds; as fast as some drop off exhausted, others spring up to renew and to perpetuate the chase; and the fated, though flying victim, never escapes—but in death. There was a faint smile upon his daughter's lip, as Mordaunt bent down to kiss it; the dark lash rested on the snowy lid—ah, that tears had no well beneath its surface!—and her breath stole from her rich lips with so regular and calm a motion, that like the "forest leaves," it "seemed stirred with prayer!" * One arm lay over the coverlid, the other pillowed her head, in the unrivalled grace of infancy.

Mordaunt stooped once more, for his heart filled as he gazed upon his child, to kiss her cheek again, and to mingle a blessing with the kiss. When he rose—upon that fair smooth face there was one bright and glistening drop; and Isabel stirred in sleep, and, as if suddenly vexed by some painful dream, she sighed deeply as she stirred. It was the last time that the cheek of the young and predestined orphan was ever pressed by a father's kiss, or moistened by a father's tear! He left the room silently; no sooner *had* he left it than, as if without the precincts of some charmed and preserving circle, the chill and presentiment at his heart returned. There is a feeling which perhaps all have in a momentary hypochondria felt at times; it is a strong and shuddering impression which Coleridge has embodied in his own dark and supernatural verse, *that something not of earth is behind us*—that if we turned our gaze backward we should behold that which would make the heart as a bolt of ice, and the eye shrivel and parch within its socket. And so intense is the fancy that, *when* we turn, and all is void, from that very void we could shape a spectre, as fearful as the image our terror had foredrawn! Somewhat such feeling had Mordaunt now, as his steps sounded hollow and echoless on the stairs, and the stars filled the air around him with their shadowy and solemn presence. Breaking by a violent effort from a spell of which he felt that a frame somewhat overtasked of late was the real enchanter, he turned once more into the room, which he had left to visit Isabel. He had pledged his personal attendance at an important motion in the House of Commons for that night, and some political papers were left upon his table, which he had promised to give to one of the members of his party. He entered the room, purposing to stay only a minute; an hour passed before he left it; and his servant afterwards observed that, on giving him some orders as he passed through the hall to the carriage, his cheek was as white as marble, and that his step, usually so haughty and firm, reeled and trembled like a fainting man's. Dark and inexplicable Fate! weaver of wild contrasts, demon of this hoary and old world, that movest through it, as a spirit moveth over the waters, filling the depths of things with a solemn mystery and an everlasting change! thou sweepest over our graves, and Joy is born from the ashes: thou sweepest over Joy, and lo, it is a grave! Engine and tool of the Almighty, whose years cannot fade, thou changest the earth as a garment and as a vesture it is changed; thou makest it one vast sepulchre and womb united, swallowing and creating life! and reproducing, over and over, from age to age, from the birth of creation to the creation's doom, the same dust and atoms *which were* our fathers, and which are the sole heirlooms that through countless generations they bequeath and perpetuate to their sons.

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* And yet the forest leaves seemed stirred with prayer.
—BYRON.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

Methinks, before the issue of our fate,
A spirit moves within us, and impels
The passion of a prophet to our lips.—ANON.
O vitæ philosophia dux, virtutis indagatrix !—CIC.*

UPON leaving the House of Commons, Mordaunt was accosted by Lord Ulswater, who had just taken his seat in the Upper House. Whatever abstraction or whatever weakness Mordaunt might have manifested before he had left his home, he had now entirely conquered both; and it was with his usual collected address that he replied to Lord Ulswater's salutations, and congratulated him on his change of name, and accession of honors.

It was a night of uncommon calm and beauty; and, although the moon was not visible, the frosty and clear sky, "clad in the lustre of its thousand stars," † seemed scarcely to mourn either the hallowing light, or the breathing poesy of her presence; and, when Lord Ulswater proposed that Mordaunt should dismiss his carriage, and that they should walk home, Algernon consented not unwillingly to the proposal. He felt, indeed, an unwonted relief in companionship; and the still air, and the deep heavens, seemed to woo him from more unwelcome thoughts, as with a softening and a sister's love.

"Let us, before we return home," said Lord Ulswater, "stroll for a few moments towards the bridge; I love looking at the river on a night like this."

Whoever inquires into human circumstances will be struck to find how invariably a latent current of fatality appears to pervade them. It is the turn of the atom in the scale which makes our safety, or our peril; our glory, or our shame; raises us to the throne or sinks us to the grave. A secret voice at Mordaunt's heart prompted him to dissent from this proposal, trifling as it seemed, and welcome as it was to his present and peculiar mood: he resisted the voice—the moment passed away, and the last seal was set upon his doom—they moved onward towards the bridge. At first, both were silent, for Lord Ulswater used the ordinary privilege of a lover, and was absent and absorbed, and his companion was never the first to break a taciturnity natural to his habits. At last Lord Ulswater said, "I rejoice that you are now in the sphere of action most likely to display your talents—you have not spoken yet, I think; indeed, there has been no fitting opportunity, but you will soon, I trust."

"I know not," said Mordaunt, with a melancholy smile, "whether you judge rightly in thinking the sphere of political exertion one the most calculated for me: but I feel at my heart a foreboding that my planet is not fated to shine in *any* earthly sphere. Sorrow and misfortune have dimmed it in its birth, and now it is waning towards its decline."

"Its decline!" repeated his companion—"no, rather its meridian. You are in the vigor of your years, the noon of your prosperity, the height of your intellect and knowledge; you require only an effort to add to these blessings the most lasting of all—Fame!"

"Well," said Mordaunt, and a momentary light flashed over his countenance, "the effort *will* be made. I do not pretend not to have felt ambition. No man should make it his boast, for it often gives to our frail and earth-bound virtue both its weapon and its wings; but when the soil is exhausted, its produce fails; and when we have forced our hearts to too great an abundance, whether it be of flowers that perish, or of grain that endures, the seeds of after hope bring forth but a languid and scanty harvest. My earliest idol was ambition; but then came others, love and knowledge, and afterwards the desire to bless. That desire you may term ambition; but we will suppose them separate passions; for by the latter I would signify the thirst for glory, either in evil or in good; and the former teaches us, though by little and little, to gain its object, no less in secrecy than for applause; and Wisdom, which opens to us a world, vast but hidden from the crowd, establishes also over that world an arbiter of its own, so that its disciples grow proud, and communing with their own hearts, care for no louder judgment than the still voice within. It is thus that indifference, not to the welfare, but to the report, of others grows over us; and often, while we are the most ardent in their cause, we are the least anxious for their esteem.

"And yet," said Lord Ulswater, "I have thought the passion for esteem is the best guarantee for deserving it."

* O Philosophy, conductress of life—searcher after virtue!

† Marlow.

"Nor without justice—other passions may supply its place, and produce the same effects; but the love of true glory is the most legitimate agent of extensive good, and you do right to worship and enshrine it. For me it is dead: it survived—ay, the truth shall out!—poverty, want, disappointment, baffled aspirations—all, all, but the deadness, the lethargy of regret: when no one was left upon this altered earth to animate its efforts, to smile upon its success, then the last spark quivered and died;—and—and—but forgive me—on this subject I am not often wont to wander. I would say that ambition is for me no more—not so are its effects; but the hope of serving that race whom I have loved as brothers, but who have never known me—who, by the exterior (and here something bitter mingled with his voice), pass sentence on the heart—in whose eyes I am only the cold, the wayward, the haughty, the morose—the hope of serving them is to me, now, a far stronger passion than ambition was heretofore; and, whatever for that end the love of fame would have dictated, the love of mankind will teach me still more ardently to perform."

They were now upon the bridge:—Pausing, they leant over, and looked along the scene before them. Dark and hushed, the river flowed sullenly on, save where the reflected stars made a tremulous and broken beam on the black surface of the water, or the lights of the vast City which lay in shadow on its banks, scattered, at capricious intervals, a pale but unpiercing wanness, rather than lustre, along the tide; or, save where the stillness was occasionally broken by the faint oar of the boatman, or the call of his rude voice, mellowed almost into music by distance and the element.

But behind them as they leant, the feet of passengers, on the great thoroughfare, passed not oft—but quick; and that sound, the commonest of earth's, made rarer and rarer by the advancing night, contrasted, rather than destroyed, the quiet of the heaven, and the solemnity of the silent stars.

"It is an old, but a just, comparison," said Mordaunt's companion, "which has likened life to a river such as we now survey, gliding alternately in light or in darkness, in sunshine or in storm, to that great ocean in which all waters meet."

"If," said Algernon, with his usual thoughtful and pensive smile, "we may be allowed to vary that simile, I would, separating the universal and eternal course of Destiny from the fleeting generations of human life, compare the river before us to *that* course, and not *it*, but the city scattered on its banks, to the varieties and mutability of life. There (in the latter) crowded together in the great chaos of social union, we herd in the night of ages, flinging the little lustre of our dim lights over the sullen tide which rolls beside us—seeing the tremulous ray glitter on the surface, only to show us how profound is the gloom which it cannot break, and the depths which it is too faint to pierce. There Crime stalks, and Woe hushes her moan, and Poverty couchés, and Wealth riots—and Death, in all and each, is at his silent work. But the stream of Fate, unconscious of our changes and decay, glides on to its engulphing bourn; and, while it mirrors the faintest smile or the lightest frown of Heaven, beholds, without a change upon its surface, the generations of earth perish, and be renewed, along its banks!"

There was a pause; and by an involuntary and natural impulse, they turned from the waves beneath, to the heaven, which, in its breathing contrast, spread all eloquently, yet hushed, above. They looked upon the living and intense stars, and felt palpably at their hearts that spell—wild, but mute—which nothing on or of earth can inspire; that pining of the imprisoned soul, that longing after the immortality on high, which is perhaps no imaginary type of the immortality ourselves are heirs to.

"It is on such nights as these," said Mordaunt, who first broke the silence, but with a low and soft voice, "that we are tempted to believe that in Plato's divine fancy there is as divine a truth—that 'our souls are *indeed* of the same essence as the stars,' and that the mysterious yearning, the impatient wish which swells and soars within us to mingle with their glory, is but the instinctive and natural longing to reunite the divided *portion* of an immortal spirit, stored in these cells of clay, with the original lustre of the heavenly and burning *whole!*"

"And *hence* then," said his companion, pursuing the idea, "might we also believe in that wondrous and wild influence which the stars have been fabled to exercise over our fate; hence might we shape a visionary clue to their imagined power over our birth, our destinies, and our death."

"Perhaps," rejoined Mordaunt, and Lord Ulswater has since said that his countenance, as he spoke, wore an awful and strange aspect, which lived long and long afterwards in the memory of his companion, "perhaps they *are* tokens and signs between the soul and the things of Heaven which do not wholly shame the doctrine of *him* * from whose bright wells Plato drew (while he colored with his own gorgeous errors) the waters of his sublime lore." As Mordaunt thus spoke, his voice changed: he paused abruptly, and, pointing to a distant quarter of the heavens, said,

"Look yonder; do you see, in the far horizon, one large and solitary star, that, at this very moment, seems to wax pale and paler, as my hand points to it?"

"I see it—it shrinks and soars, while we gaze into the farther depths of heaven, as if it were seeking to rise to some higher orbit."

"And do you see," rejoined Mordaunt, "yon fleecy, but dusk cloud, which sweeps slowly along the sky towards it? What shape does that cloud wear to your eyes?"

"It seems to me," answered Lord Ulswater, "to assume the exact semblance of a funeral procession—the human shape appears to me as distinctly moulded in the thin vapors as in ourselves; nor would it perhaps ask too great indulgence from our fancy, to image amongst the darker forms in the centre of the cloud one bearing the very appearance *of a bier*—the plume, and the caparison, and the steeds, and the mourners! Still, as I look, the likeness seems to me to increase!"

"Strange," said Mordaunt musingly, "how strange is this thing which we call the mind! Strange that the dreams and superstitions of childhood should cling to it with so inseparable and fond a strength! I remember, years since, that I was affected even as I am now, to a degree which wiser men might shrink to confess, upon gazing on a cloud exactly similar to that which at this instant we behold. But see—that cloud has passed over the star; and now, as it rolls away, look, the star itself has vanished into the heavens."

"But I fear," answered Lord Ulswater, with a slight smile, "that we can deduce no omen either from the cloud or the star: would, indeed, that Nature *were* more visibly knit with our individual existence! Would that in the heavens there *were* a book, and in the waves a voice, and on the earth a token of the mysteries and enigmas of our fate!"

"And yet," said Mordaunt, slowly, as his mind gradually rose from its dream-like oppression to its wonted and healthful tone, "yet, in truth, we want neither sign nor omen from other worlds to teach us all that it is the end of existence to fulfil in this; and that seems to me a far less exalted wisdom which enables us to solve the *riddles*, than that which elevates us above the *chances*, of the future."

"But *can* we be placed above those chances—can we become independent of that fate to which the ancients taught that even their deities were submitted?"

"Let us not so wrong the ancients," answered Mordaunt; "their poets taught it, not their philosophers. Would not virtue be a dream, a mockery indeed, if it were, like the herb of the field, a thing of blight and change, of withering and renewal, a minion of the sunbeam and the cloud? Shall calamity deject it? Shall prosperity pollute? *then* let it not be the object of our aspiration, but the byword of our contempt. No: let us rather believe, with the great of old, that when it is based on wisdom, it is throned above change and chance! throned above the things of a petty and sordid world! throned above the Olympus of the heathen! throned above the Stars which fade, and the Moon which waneth in her course! Shall *we* believe less of the divinity of Virtue than an Athenian Sage? Shall *we*, to whose eyes have been revealed without a cloud, the blaze and the glory of Heaven, make Virtue a slave to those chains of earth which the Pagan subjected to her feet? But if by *her* we can trample on the ills of life, are we not, a hundred-fold more, by her, the vanquishers of death? All creation lies before us; shall we cling to a grain of dust? All immortality is our heritage: shall we gasp and sicken for a moment's breath? What if we perish within an hour?—what if already the black cloud lowers over us—what if from our hopes and projects, and the fresh woven ties which we have knit around our life, we are abruptly torn, shall we be the creatures or the conquerors of fate? Shall we be the exiled from a home, or the escaped from a dungeon? Are we not as birds which look into the Great Air only through a

* Socrates, who taught the belief in omens.

barred cage? Shall we shrink and mourn when the cage is shattered, and all space spreads around us—our element and our empire? No; it was not for this that, in an elder day, Virtue and Valor received but a common name! The soul, into which *that* Spirit has breathed its glory, is not only above Fate—it profits by her assaults! Attempt to weaken it, and you nerve it with a new strength—to wound it, and you render it more invulnerable—to destroy it, and you make it immortal! This, indeed, is the Sovereign whose realm every calamity increases—the Hero whose triumph every invasion augments!—standing on the last sands of life, and encircled by the advancing waters of Darkness and Eternity, it becomes in its expiring effort *doubly* the Victor and the King!"

Impressed, by the fervor of his companion, with a sympathy almost approaching to awe, Lord Ulswater pressed Mordaunt's hand, but offered no reply; and both, excited by the high theme of their conversation, and the thoughts which it produced, moved in silence from their post, and walked slowly homeward.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

Is it possible?
Is't so? I *can* no longer what I *would!*
No longer draw back at my liking! I
Must do the deed because I thought of it.
* * * *
What is thy enterprise—thy aim, thy object?
Hast honestly confessed it to thyself?
* * * *
O bloody, frightful deed!
* * * *
Was that my purpose when we parted?
O God of Justice!—COLERIDGE'S *Wallenstein.*

WE need scarcely say that one of the persons overheard by Mr. Brown was Wolfe, and the peculiar tone of oratorical exaggeration, characteristic of the man, has already informed the reader with which of the two he is identified.

On the evening after the conversation—the evening fixed for the desperate design on which he had set the last hazard of his life—the republican, parting from the companions with whom he had passed the day, returned home to compose the fever of his excited thoughts, and have a brief hour of solitary meditation, previous to the committal of that act which he knew must be his immediate passport to the jail and the gibbet. On entering his squalid and miserable home, the woman of the house, a blear-eyed and filthy hag, who was holding to her withered breast an infant, which, even in sucking the stream that nourished its tainted existence, betrayed upon its haggard countenance the polluted nature of the mother's milk, from which it drew at once the support of life and the seeds of death—this woman, meeting him in the narrow passage, arrested his steps, to acquaint him that a gentleman had that day called upon him, and left a letter in his room, with strict charge of care and speed in its delivery. The visitor had not, however, communicated his name, though the curiosity excited by his mien and dress had prompted the crone particularly to demand it.

Little affected by this incident, which to the hostess seemed no unimportant event, Wolfe pushed the woman aside, with an impatient gesture, and, scarcely conscious of the abuse which followed this motion, hastened up the sordid stairs, to his apartment. He sate himself down upon the foot of his bed, and, covering his face with his hands, surrendered his mind to the tide of contending emotions which rushed upon it.

What was he about to commit? Murder!—murder in its coldest and most premeditated guise! "No!" cried he aloud, starting from the bed, and dashing his clenched hand violently against his brow—"no—no—no! it is not murder, it is justice! Did not they, the hirelings of Oppression, ride over their crushed and shrieking countrymen, with drawn blades and murtherous hands? Was I not among them at the hour? Did I not with these eyes see the sword uplifted, and the smiter strike? Were not my ears filled with the groans of their victims and the savage yells of the trampling dastards!—yells which rung in triumph over women and babes and weaponless men? And shall there be no vengeance? Yes, it shall fall, not upon the tools, but the master—not upon the slaves, but the despot! "Yet," said he, suddenly pausing, as his voice sank into a whisper, "Assassination!—in another hour, perhaps—a deed irrevocable—a seal set upon two souls—the victim's and the judge's! Fetters and the felon's cord before me!—the shouting mob—the stigma!—no, no, it will *not* be the stigma; the gratitude, rather, of future

times, when motives will be appreciated and party hushed! Have I not wrestled with wrong from my birth?—have I not rejected all offers from the men of an impious power?—have I made a moment's truce with the poor man's foe?—have I not thrice purchased free principles with an imprisoned frame!—have I not bartered my substance, and my hopes, and the pleasures of this world for my unmoving, unswerving faith in the Great Cause?—am I not about to crown all by one blow—one lightning blow, destroying at once myself and a criminal too mighty for the law?—and shall not history do justice to this devotedness—this absence from all self, hereafter—and admire, even if it condemn?"

Buoying himself with these reflections, and exciting the jaded current of his designs once more into an unnatural impetus, the unhappy man ceased, and paced with rapid steps the narrow limits of his chamber; his eye fell upon something bright, which glittered amidst the darkened shawdows of the evening. At that sight his heart stood still for a moment; it was the weapon of intended death: he took it up, and as he surveyed the shining barrel, and felt the lock, a more settled sternness gathered at once over his fierce features and stubborn heart. The pistol had been bought and prepared for the purpose with the utmost nicety, not only for use, but show; nor is it unfrequent to find in such instances of premeditated ferocity in design, a fearful kind of coxcombry lavished upon the means.

Striking a light, Wolfe re-seated himself deliberately, and began, with the utmost care, to load the pistol; that scene would not have been an unworthy sketch for those painters who possess the power of giving to the low a force almost approaching to grandeur, and of augmenting the terrible by a mixture of the ludicrous; the sordid chamber, the damp walls, the high window, in which a handful of discolored paper supplied the absence of many a pane; the single table of rough oak, the rush-bottomed and broken chair, the hearth unconscious of a fire, over which a mean bust of Milton held its tutelary sway—while the dull rushlight streamed dimly upon the swarthy and strong countenance of Wolfe, intent upon his work—a countenance in which the deliberate calmness that had succeeded the late struggle of feeling had in it a mingled power of energy and haggardness of languor, the one of the desperate design, the other of the exhausted body, while in the knit brow, and the iron lines, and even in the settled ferocity of expression, there was yet something above the stamp of the vulgar ruffian—something eloquent of the motive no less than the deed, and significant of that not ignoble perversity of mind which diminished the guilt, yet increased the dreadness of the meditated crime, by mocking it with the name of virtue.

As he had finished his task, and, hiding the pistol in his person, waited for the hour in which his accomplice was to summon him to the fatal deed, he perceived, close by him on the table, the letter which the woman had spoken of, and which, till then, he had, in the excitement of his mind, utterly forgotten. He opened it mechanically—an inclosure fell to the ground. He picked it up—it was a bank note of considerable amount. The lines in the letter were few, anonymous, and written in a hand evidently disguised. They were calculated peculiarly to touch the republican, and reconcile him to the gift. In them the writer professed to be actuated by no other feeling than admiration for the unbending integrity which had characterized Wolfe's life, and the desire that sincerity in any principles, however they might differ from his own, should not be rewarded only with indigence and ruin.

It is impossible to tell how far, in Wolfe's mind, his own desperate fortunes might, insensibly, have mingled with the motives which led him to his present design: certain it is that, wherever the future is hopeless, the mind is easily converted from the rugged to the criminal; and equally certain it is that we are apt to justify to ourselves many offences in a cause where we have made great sacrifices: and, perhaps, if this unexpected assistance had come to Wolfe a short time before, it might, by softening his heart, and reconciling him in some measure to fortune, have rendered him less susceptible to the fierce voice of political hatred and the instigation of his associates. Nor can we, who are removed from the temptations of the poor—temptations to which ours are as breezes which woo, to storms which "tumble towers"—nor can we tell how far the acerbity of want, and the absence of wholesome sleep, and the contempt of the rich, and the rankling

memory of better fortunes, or even the mere fierceness which absolute hunger produces in the humors and veins of all that hold nature's life—nor can we tell how far these madden the temper, which is but a minion of the body, and plead in irresistible excuse for the crimes which our wondering virtue—haughty because unsolicited—stamps with its loftiest reprobation!

The cloud fell from Wolfe's brow, and his eye gazed, musingly and rapt, upon vacancy. Steps were heard ascending—the voice of a distant clock tolled with a distinctness which seemed like strokes palpable as well as audible to the senses; and as the door opened, and his accomplice entered, Wolfe muttered—"Too late—too late!"—and first crushing the note in his hands, then tore it into atoms, with a vehemence which astonished his companion, who, however, knew not its value.

"Come," said he, stamping his foot violently upon the floor, as if to conquer by passion all internal relenting—"come, my friend, not another moment is to be lost; let us hasten to our holy deed!"

"I trust," said Wolfe's companion, when they were in the open street, "that we shall not have our trouble in vain; it is a brave night for it! Davidson wanted us to throw grenades into the ministers' carriages, as the best plan; and, faith, we can try that if all else fails!"

Wolfe remained silent—indeed he scarcely heard his companion; for a sullen indifference to all things around him had wrapt his spirit—that singular feeling, or rather absence from feeling, common to all men, when bound on some exciting action, upon which their minds are already and wholly bent;—which renders them utterly without thought, when the superficial would imagine they were the most full of it, and leads them to the threshold of that event which had before engrossed all their most waking and fervid contemplation with a blind and mechanical unconsciousness, resembling the influence of a dream.

They arrived at the place they had selected for their station—sometimes walking to and fro, in order to escape observation, sometimes hiding behind the pillars of a neighboring house, they awaited the coming of their victims. The time passed on—the streets grew more and more empty; and, at last, only the visitation of the watchman—or the occasional steps of some homeward wanderer, disturbed the solitude of their station.

At last, just after midnight, two men were seen approaching towards them, linked arm in arm, and walking very slowly.

"Hist—hist," whispered Wolfe's comrade—"there they are at last—is your pistol cocked?"

"Ay," answered Wolfe, "and yours: man—collect yourself—your hand shakes."

"It is with the cold, then," said the ruffian, using, unconsciously, a celebrated reply—"Let us withdraw behind the pillar."

They did so—the figures approached them; the night, though star-lit, was not sufficiently clear to give the assassins more than the outline of their shapes, and the characters of their height and air.

"Which," said Wolfe, in a whisper—for, as he had said, he had never seen either of his intended victims—"which is *my* prey?"

"Oh, the nearest to you," said the other, with trembling accents; "you know his d—d proud walk, and erect head—that is the way he answers the people's petitions, I'll be sworn. The taller and farther one, who stoops more in his gait, is mine."

The strangers were now at hand.

"You know you are to fire first, Wolfe," whispered the nearer ruffian, whose heart had long failed him, and who was already meditating escape.

"But are you sure—quite sure of the identity of our prey?" said Wolfe, grasping his pistol.

"Yes, yes," said the other; and, indeed, the air of the nearest person approaching them bore, in the distance, a strong resemblance to that of the minister it was supposed to designate. His companion, who appeared much younger, and of a mien equally patrician, but far less proud, seemed listening to the supposed minister with the most earnest attention. Apparently occupied with their conversation, when about twenty yards from the assassins, they stood still for a few moments.

"Stop, Wolfe, stop," said the republican's accomplice, whose Indian complexion, by fear, and the wan light of the lamps and skies, faded into a jaundiced and yellow hue, while the bony whiteness of his teeth made a grim contrast with the glare of his small, black, sparkling eyes. "Stop, Wolfe—hold your hand. I see, now, that I was mistaken; the farther one

is a stranger to me, and the nearer one is much thinner than the minister: pocket your pistol —quick—quick—and let us withdraw."

Wolfe dropped his hand, as if dissuaded from his design; but, as he looked upon the trembling frame and chattering teeth of his terrified accomplice, a sudden, and not unnatural, idea darted across his mind that he was wilfully deceived by the fears of his companion; and that the strangers, who had now resumed their way, were indeed what his accomplice had first reported them to be. Filled with this impression, and acting upon the momentary spur which it gave, the infatuated and fated man pushed aside his comrade, with a muttered oath at his cowardice and treachery, and taking a sure and steady, though quick, aim at the person, who was now just within the certain destruction of his hand, he fired the pistol. The stranger reeled, and fell into the arms of his companion.

"Hurra!" cried the murderer, leaping from his hiding place, and walking with rapid strides towards his victim—"hurra! for liberty and England!"

Scarce had he uttered those prostituted names, before the triumph of misguided zeal faded suddenly and for ever from his brow and soul.

The wounded man leaned back in the supporting arms of his chilled and horror-stricken friend; who, kneeling on one knee to support him, fixed his eager eyes upon the pale and changing countenance of his burthen, unconscious of the presence of the assassin.

"Speak, Mordaunt, speak! how is it with you?" he said.

Recalled from his torpor by the voice, Mordaunt opened his eyes, and muttering "My child, my child," sunk back again; and Lord Ulswater (for it was he) felt, by his increased weight, that death was hastening rapidly on its victim.

"Oh!" said he, bitterly, and recalling their last conversation—"Oh! where—where—when this man—the wise, the kind, the innocent, almost the perfect, falls thus in the very prime of existence, by a sudden blow from an obscure hand—unblest in life, inglorious in death—oh! where—where is this boasted triumph of Virtue, or where is its reward?"

True to his idol at the last, as these words fell upon his dizzy and receding senses, Mordaunt raised himself by a sudden, though momentary, exertion; and fixing his eyes full upon Lord Ulswater, his moving lips (for his voice was already gone) seemed to shape out the answer, "*It is here!*"

With this last effort, and with an expression upon his aspect which seemed at once to soften and to hallow the haughty and calm character which in life it was wont to bear, Algernon Mordaunt fell once more back into the arms of his companion, and immediately expired.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

Come, Death, these are thy victims, and the axe
Waits those who claimed the chariot.—Thus we count
Our treasures in the dark, and when the light
Breaks on the cheated eye, we find the coin
Was skulls.—
* * * * *
Yet the while
Fate links strange contrasts, and the scaffold's gloom
Is neighbored by the altar.—ANON.

WHEN Crauford's guilt and imprisonment became known; when Inquiry developed, day after day, some new maze in the mighty and intricate machinery of his sublime dishonesty; when houses of the most reputed wealth and profuse splendor, whose affairs Crauford had transacted, were discovered to have been for years utterly undermined and beggared, and only supported by the extraordinary genius of the individual by whose extraordinary guilt, now no longer concealed, they were suddenly and irretrievably destroyed; when it was ascertained that, for nearly the fifth part of a century, a system of villainy had been carried on throughout Europe, in a thousand different relations, without a single breath of suspicion, and yet which a single breath of suspicion could at once have arrested and exposed; when it was proved that a man whose luxury had exceeded the pomp of princes, and whose wealth was supposed more inexhaustible than the enchanted purse of Fortunatus, had for eighteen years been a penniless pensioner upon the prosperity of others; when the long scroll of this almost incredible fraud was slowly, piece by piece, unrolled before the terrified curiosity of the public, an invading army at the Temple gates could scarcely have excited such universal consternation and dismay.

The mob, always the first to execute justice, in their own inimitable way, took vengeance upon Crauford, by burning the house no longer his, and the houses of the partners, who were the worst and most innocent sufferers for his crime. No epithet of horror and hatred was too severe for the offender; and serious apprehension for the safety of Newgate, his present habitation, was generally expressed. The more saintly members of that sect to which the hypocrite had ostensibly belonged, held up their hands, and declared that the fall of the Pharisee was a judgment of Providence. Nor did they think it worth while to make, for a moment, the trifling inquiry, how far the judgment of Providence was also implicated in the destruction of the numerous and innocent families he had ruined !

But, whether from that admiration for genius, common to the vulgar, which forgets all crime in the cleverness of committing it, or from that sagacious disposition peculiar to the English, which makes a hero of any person eminently wicked, no sooner did Crauford's trial come on than the tide of popular feeling experienced a sudden revulsion. It became, in an instant, the fashion to admire and to pity a gentleman so *talented* and so *unfortunate*. Likenesses of Mr. Crauford appeared in every print-shop in town—the papers discovered that he was the very facsimile of the great King of Prussia. The laureate made an ode upon him, which was set to music; and the public learnt, with tears of compassionate regret at so romantic a circumstance, that pigeon-pies were sent daily to his prison, made by the delicate hands of one of his former mistresses. Some sensation, also, was excited by the circumstance of his poor wife (who soon afterwards died of a broken heart) coming to him in prison, and being with difficulty torn away; but then, conjugal affection is so very common-place, and—there was something so engrossingly pathetic in the anecdote of the pigeon-pies !

It must be confessed that Crauford displayed singular address and ability upon his trial; and fighting every inch of ground, even to the last, when so strong a phalanx of circumstances appeared against him, that no hope of a favorable verdict could for a moment have supported him—he concluded the trial with a speech delivered by himself—so impressive, so powerful, so dignified, yet so impassioned, that the whole audience, hot as they were, dissolved into tears.

Sentence was passed—Death ! But such was the infatuation of the people, that every one expected that a pardon, for crime more complicated and extensive than half the Newgate Calendar could equal, would of course be obtained. Persons of the highest rank interested themselves in his behalf: and up to the night before his execution, expectations, almost amounting to certainty, were entertained by the criminal, his friends, and the public. On that night was conveyed to Crauford the positive and peremptory assurance that there was no hope. Let us now enter his cell, and be the sole witnesses of his solitude.

Crauford was, as we have seen, a man in some respects of great *moral* courage, of extraordinary daring in the formation of schemes, of unwavering resolution in supporting them, and of a temper which rather rejoiced in, than shunned, the braving of a distant danger for the sake of an adequate reward. But this courage was supported and fed solely by the self-persuasion of consummate genius, and his profound confidence both in his good fortune, and the inexhaustibility of his resources. *Physically* he was a coward ! *immediate* peril to be confronted by the *person*, not the *mind*, had ever appalled him like a chlld. He had never dared to back a spirited horse. He had been known to remain for days in an obscure alehouse in the country, to which a shower had accidently driven him, because it had been idly reported that a wild beast had escaped from a caravan, and been seen in the vicinity of the inn. No dog had ever been allowed in his household, lest it *might* go mad. In a word, Crauford was one to whom life and sensual enjoyments were every thing—the supreme blessings—the only blessings.

As long as he had the hope, and it was a sanguine hope, of *saving* life, nothing had disturbed his mind from its serenity. His gaiety had never forsaken him; and his cheerfulness and fortitude had been the theme of every one admitted to his presence. But when this hope was abruptly and finally closed—when Death, immediate and unavoidable—Death—the extinction of existence—the *cessation of sense*, stood bare and hideous before him, his genius seemed at once to abandon him to his fate, and the inherent weakness of his nature

to gush over every prop and barrier of his art.

"No hope!" muttered he, in a voice of the keenest anguish—"no hope—merciful God—none—none! What, I—*I*—who have shamed kings in luxury—I to die on the gibbet, among the reeking, gaping, swinish crowd with whom ——. Oh God, that I were one of *them* even! that I were the most loathsome beggar that ever crept forth to taint the air with sores!—that I were a toad immured in a stone, sweltering in the atmosphere of its own venom!—a snail crawling on these very walls, and tracking his painful path in slime!—any thing—any thing, but death! And *such* death—the gallows—the scaffold—the halter—the fingers of the hangman paddling round the neck where the softest caresses have clung *and sated.* To die—die—die! What, *I* whose pulse now beats so strongly—whose blood keeps so warm and vigorous a motion!—in the very prime of enjoyment and manhood—all life's million paths of pleasure before me—to die—to swing to the winds—to hang—ay—ay—to hang!—to be cut down, distorted and hideous—to be thrust into the earth with worms—to rot, or—or—or hell! is there a hell?—*better that even, than annihilation!*

"Fool—fool!—damnable fool that I was (and in his sudden rage he clenched his own flesh till the nails met in it); had I but got to France one day sooner! Why don't you save me—save me—you whom I have banquetted, and feasted, and lent money to!—one word from you might have saved me—I will not die! I don't deserve it!—I am innocent!—I tell you Not guilty, my lord—not guilty! Have you no heart, no conscience?—murder—murder—murder!" and the wretched man sunk upon the ground, and tried with his hands to grasp the stone floor, as if to cling to it from some imaginary violence.

Turn we from him to the cell in which another criminal awaits also the awful coming of his latest morrow.

Pale, motionless, silent—with his face bending over his bosom, and hands clasped tightly upon his knees, Wolfe sat in his dungeon, and collected his spirit against the approaching consummation of his turbulent and stormy fate—his bitterest punishment had been already past; mysterious Chance, or rather the Power above chance, had denied to him the haughty triumph of self-applause. No sophistry, now, could compare his doom to that of Sidney, or his deed to the act of the avenging Brutus.

Murder—causeless—objectless—universally execrated—rested, and would rest (till oblivion wrapt it) upon his name. It had appeared, too, upon his trial, that he had, in the information he had received, being the mere tool of a spy, in the ministers' pay; and that, for weeks before his intended deed, his design had been known, and his conspiracy only not bared to the public eye, because political craft awaited a ripe opportunity for the disclosure. He had not then merely been the blind dupe of his own passions, but, more humbling still, an instrument in the hands of the very men whom his hatred was sworn to destroy. Not a wreck—not a straw of the vain glory, for which he had forfeited life, and risked his soul, could he hug to a sinking heart, and say—"This is my support."

The remorse of gratitude embittered his cup still farther. On Mordaunt's person had been discovered a memorandum of the money anonymously enclosed to Wolfe on the day of the murder; and it was couched in words of esteem which melted the fierce heart of the republican into the only tears he had shed since childhood. From that time, a sullen, silent spirit fell upon him. He spoke to none—heeded none: he made no defence in trial—no complaint of severity—no appeal from judgment. The iron had entered into his soul—but it supported, while it tortured. Even now, as we gaze upon his inflexible and dark countenance, no transitory emotion—no natural spasm of sudden fear for the catastrophe of the morrow—no intense and working passions, struggling into calm—no sign of internal hurricanes, rising, as it were, from the hidden depths, agitate the surface, or betray the secrets of the unfathomable world within. The mute lip—the rigid brow—the downcast eye—a heavy and dread stillness, brooding over every feature—these are all we behold!

Is it that thought sleeps, locked in the torpor of a senseless and rayless dream; or that an evil incubus weighs upon it, crushing its risings, but deadening not its pangs? Does Memory fly to the green fields and happy home of his childhood, or the lonely studies of his daring and restless youth, or his earliest homage to that Spirit of Freedom which shone bright, and still,

and pure, upon the solitary chamber of him who sung of heaven;* or (dwelling on its last and most fearful object) rolls it only through one tumultuous and convulsive channel—Despair? Whatever be within the silent and deep heart—pride, or courage, or callousness, or that stubborn firmness, which, once principle has grown habit, cover all as with a pall; and the stung nerves and the hard endurance of the human flesh, sustain what the immortal mind perhaps quails beneath, in its dark retreat, but once dreamt that it would exult to bear.

The fatal hour had come! and through the long dim passages of the prison, four criminals were led forth to execution. The first was Crauford's associate, Bradley. This man prayed fervently; and, though he was trembling and pale, his mien and aspect bore something of the calmness of resignation.

It has been said that there is no friendship among the wicked. I have examined this maxim closely, and believe it, like most popular proverbs,—false. In wickedness there is peril—and mutual terror is the strongest of ties. At all events, the wicked can, not unoften, excite an attachment in their followers denied to virtue. Habitually courteous, caressing and familiar, Crauford had, despite his own suspicions of Bradley, really touched the heart of one, whom weakness and want, not nature, had gained to vice; and it was not till Crauford's guilt was by other witnesses undeniably proved that Bradley could be tempted to make any confession tending to implicate him.

He now crept close to his former partner, and frequently clasped his hand, and besought him to take courage, and to pray. But Crauford's eye was glassy and dim, and his veins seemed filled with water—so numbed, and cold, and white was his cheek. Fear, in him, had passed its paroxysm, and was now insensibility; it was only when they urged him to pray that a sort of benighted consciousness strayed over his countenance and his ashen lips muttered something which none heard.

After him came the Creole, who had been Wolfe's accomplice. On the night of the murder, he had taken advantage of the general loneliness, and the confusion of the few present, and fled. He was found, however, fast asleep, in a garret, before morning, by the officers of justice; and, on trial, he had confessed all. This man was in a rapid consumption. The delay of another week would have given to nature the termination of his life. He, like Bradley, seemed earnest and absorbed in prayer.

Last came Wolfe, his tall, gaunt frame worn, by confinement and internal conflict, into a gigantic skeleton; his countenance, too, had undergone a withering change: his grizzled hair seemed now to have acquired only the one hoary hue of age; and, though you might trace in his air and eye the sternness, you could no longer detect the fire, of former days. Calm, as on the preceding night, no emotion broke over his dark, but not defying features. He rejected, though not irreverently, all aid from the benevolent priest, and seemed to seek, in the pride of his own heart, a substitute for the resignation of Religion.

"Miserable man!" at last said the good clergyman, in whom zeal overcame kindness, "have you at this awful hour no prayer upon your lips?"

A living light shot then for a moment over Wolfe's eye and brow. "I have!" said he; and raising his clapsed hands to heaven, he continued in the memorable words of Sidney —"'Lord, defend thy own cause, and defend those who defend it! Stir up such as are faint; direct those that are willing; confirm those that waver; give wisdom and integrity to all: order all things so as may most redound to thine own glory!"

"I had once hoped," added Wolfe, sinking in his tone—"I had once hoped that I might with justice have continued the holy prayer;* but—" he ceased abruptly; the glow passed from his countenance, his lip quivered, and the tears stood in his eyes; and that was the only weakness he betrayed, and those were his last words.

Crauford continued, even while the rope was put round him, mute and unconscious of everything. It was said that his pulse (that of an uncommonly strong and healthy man on the

* Milton.

* "Grant that I may die glorifying thee for all thy mercies, and that at the last Thou hast permitted me to be singled out as a witness of thy truth, and even by the confession of my opposers for that OLD CAUSE in which I was from my youth engaged, and for which thou hast often and wonderfully declared thyself."—ALGERNON SIDNEY.

previous day), had become so low and faint that, an hour before his execution, it could not be felt. He and the Creole were the only ones who struggled; Wolfe died, seemingly, without a pang.

From these feverish and fearful scenes, the mind turns, with a feeling of grateful relief, to contemplate the happiness of one whose candid and high nature, and warm affections, Fortune, long befriending, had at length blest.

It was on an evening in the earliest flush of returning spring, that Lord Ulswater, with his beautiful bride, entered his magnificent domains. It had been his wish and order, in consequence of his brother's untimely death, that no public rejoicings should be made on his marriage; but the good old steward could not persuade himself entirely to enforce obedience to the first order of his new master; and as the carriage drove into the park-gates, crowds on crowds were assembled, to welcome and to gaze.

No sooner had they caught a glimpse of their young lord, whose affability and handsome person had endeared him to all who remembered his early days, and of the half blushing, half smiling, countenance beside him, than their enthusiasm could be no longer restrained. The whole scene rang with shouts of joy—and through an air filled with blessings, and amidst an avenue of happy faces, the bridal pair arrived at their home.

"Ah! Clarence (for so I *must* still call you)," said Flora, her beautiful eyes streaming with delicious tears, "let us never leave these kind hearts; let us live amongst them, and strive to repay and deserve the blessings which they shower upon us! Is not Benevolence, dearest, better than Ambition?"

"Can it not rather, my own Flora, be Ambition itself?"

CONCLUSION.

So rest you, merry gentlemen.—*Monsieur Thomas.*

THE Author has now only to take his leave of the less important characters whom he has assembled together; and then, all due courtesy to his numerous guests being performed, to retire himself to repose.

First, then, for Mr. Morris Brown:—In the second year of Lord Ulswater's marriage, the worthy broker paid Mrs. Minden's nephew a visit, in which he persuaded that gentleman to accept, "as presents," two admirable fire-screens, the property of the late Lady Waddilove: the same may be now seen in the housekeeper's room, at Borodaile Park, by any person willing to satisfy his curiosity and—the housekeeper. Of all farther particulars respecting Mr. Morris Brown, history is silent.

In the obituary for 1792, we find the following paragraph:—"Died at his house in Putney, aged seventy-three, Sir Nicholas Copperas, Knt., a gentleman well known on the Exchange for his facetious humor. Several of his *bons-mots* are still recorded in the Common Council. When residing, many years ago, in the suburbs of London, this worthy gentleman was accustomed to go from his own house to the Exchange in a coach called 'the Swallow,' that passed his door just at breakfast-time; upon which occasion he was wont wittily to observe to his accomplished spouse—'And now, Mrs. Copperas, having swallowed in the roll, I will e'en roll in the Swallow!' His whole property is left to Adolphus Copperas, Esq., Banker."

And in the next year we discover—

"Died, on Wednesday last, at her jointure house, Putney, in her sixty-eighth year, the amiable and elegant Lady Copperas, relict of the late Sir Nicholas, Knt."

Mr. Trollolop, having exhausted the whole world of Metaphysics, died like Descartes, "in believing he had left nothing unexplained."

Mr. Callythorpe entered the House of Commons, at the time of the French Revolution. He distinguished himself by many votes in favor of Mr. Pitt, and one speech which ran thus: "Sir, I believe my right honorable friend who spoke last (Mr. Pitt), designs to ruin the country; but I will support him through all; Honorable Gentlemen may laugh—but I'm a true Briton, and will not serve my friend the less because I scorn to flatter him."

Sir Christopher Findlater lost his life by an accident arising from the upset of his carriage; his good heart not having suffered him to part with a drunken coachman.

Mr. Glumford turned miser in his old age; and died of want, and an extravagant son.

Our honest Cole and his wife were always among the most welcome visitors at Lord

Ulswater's. In his extreme old age, the ex-King took a journey to Scotland, to see the Author of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." Nor should we do justice to the chief's critical discernment if we neglected to record that, from the earliest dawn of that great luminary of our age, he predicted its meridian splendor.

The eldest son of the gipsy-monarch inherited his father's spirit, and is yet alive, a general, and G.C.B.

Mr. Harrison married Miss Ellzabeth, and succeeded to the Golden Fleece.

The Duke of Haverfield and Lord Ulswater continued their friendship through life; and the letters of our dear Flora to her correspondent, Eleanor, did not cease even with that critical and perilous period to all maiden correspondence—Marriage. If we may judge from the subsequent letters which we have been permitted to see, Eleanor never repented her brilliant nuptials, nor discovered (as the Duchess of —— once said from experience), "that Dukes are as intolerable for husbands as they are delightful for matches."

And Isabel Mordaunt?—Ah! not in these pages shall *her* history be told even in epitome. Perhaps for some future narrative, her romantic and eventful fate may be reserved. Suffice it for the present, that the childhood of the young heiress passed in the house of Lord Ulswater, whose proudest boast, through a triumphant and prosperous life, was to have been her father's friend; and that as she grew up, she inherited her mother's beauty and gentle heart, and seemed to bear in her deep eyes and melancholy smile some remembrance of the scenes in which her infancy had been passed.

But for him, the husband and the father, whose trials through this wrong world I have portrayed—for him let there be neither murmurs at the blindness of Fate, nor sorrow at the darkness of his doom. Better that the lofty and bright spirit should pass away before the petty business of life had bowed it, or the sordid mists of this low earth breathed a shadow on its lustre! Who would have asked *that* spirit to have struggled on for years in the intrigues—the hopes—the objects of meaner souls? Who would have desired that the heavenward and impatient heart should have grown inured to the chains and toil of this enslaved state, or hardened into the callousness of age? Nor would we claim the vulgar pittance of compassion for a lot which is exalted *above* regret! Pity is for our weaknesses—to our weaknesses only be it given. It is the aliment of love—it is the wages of ambition—it is the rightful heritage of error! But why should pity be entertained for the soul which never fell?—for the courage which never quailed?—for the majesty never humbled?—for the wisdom which, from the rough things of the common world, raised an empire above earth and destiny?—for the stormy life?—it was a triumph!—for the early death?—it was immortality!

I have stood beside Mordaunt's tomb: his will had directed that he should sleep not in the vaults of his haughty line—and his last dwelling is surrounded by a green and pleasant spot. The trees shadow it like a temple; and a silver, though fitful brook wails with a constant, yet not ungrateful dirge, at the foot of the hill on which the tomb is placed. I have stood there in those ardent years when our wishes know no boundary, and our ambition no curb; yet, even then, I would have changed my wildest vision of romance for that quiet grave, and the dreams of the distant spirit whose relics reposed beneath it.

END OF "THE DISOWNED."

THE COMING RACE.

INSCRIBED TO MAX MÜLLER, IN TRIBUTE OF RESPECT AND ADMIRATION.

CHAPTER I.

I AM a native of ——, in the United States of America. My ancestors migrated from England in the reign of Charles II.; and my grandfather was not undistinguished in the War of Independence. My family, therefore, enjoyed a somewhat high social position in right of birth; and being also opulent, they were considered disqualified for the public service. My father once ran for Congress, but was signally defeated by his tailor. After that event he interfered little in politics, and lived much in his library. I was the eldest of three sons, and sent at the age of sixteen to the old country, partly to complete my literary education, partly to commence my commercial training in a mercantile firm at Liverpool. My father died shortly after I was twenty-one; and being left well off, and having a taste for travel and adventure, I resigned, for a time, all pursuit of the almighty dollar, and became a desultory wanderer over the face of the earth.

In the year 18—, happening to be in ——, I was invited by a professional engineer, with whom I had made acquaintance, to visit the recesses of the —— mine, upon which he was employed.

The reader will understand, ere he close this narrative, my reason for concealing all clue to the district of which I write, and will perhaps thank me for refraining from any description that may tend to its discovery.

Let me say, then, as briefly as possible, that I accompanied the engineer into the interior of the mine, and became so strangely fascinated by its gloomy wonders, and so interested in my friend's explorations, that I prolonged my stay in the neighborhood, and descended daily, for some weeks, into the vaults and galleries hollowed by nature and art beneath the surface of the earth. The engineer was persuaded that far richer deposits of mineral wealth than had yet been detected, would be found in a new shaft that had been commenced under his operations. In piercing this shaft we came one day upon a chasm jagged and seemingly charred at the sides, as if burst asunder at some distant period by volcanic fires. Down this chasm my friend caused himself to be lowered in a "cage," having first tested the atmosphere by the safety-lamp. He remained nearly an hour in the abyss. When he returned he was very pale, and with an auxious, thoughtful expression of face, very different from its ordinary character, which was open, cheerful, and fearless.

He said briefly that the descent appeared to him unsafe, and leading to no result; and, suspending further operations in the shaft, we returned to the more familiar parts of the mine.

All the rest of that day the engineer seemed preoccupied by some absorbing thought. He was unusually taciturn, and there was a scared, bewildered look in his eyes, as that of a man who has seen a ghost. At night, as we two were sitting alone in the lodging we shared together near the mouth of the mine, I said to my friend,—

"Tell me frankly what you saw in that chasm: I am sure it was something strange and terrible. Whatever it be, it has left your mind in a state of doubt. In such a case two heads are better than one. Confide in me."

The engineer long endeavored to evade my inquiries; but as, while he spoke, he helped himself unconsciously out of the brandy-flask to a degree to which he was wholly unaccus-

tomed, for he was a very temperate man, his reserve gradually melted away. He who would keep himself to himself should imitate the dumb animals, and drink water. At last he said, "I will tell you all. When the cage stopped, I found myself on a ridge of rock; and below me, the chasm, taking a slanting direction, shot down to a considerable depth, the darkness of which my lamp could not have penetrated. But through it, to my infinite surprise, streamed upward a steady brilliant light. Could it be any volcanic fire; in that case, surely I should have felt the heat. Still, if on this there was doubt, it was of the utmost importance to our common safety to clear it up. I examined the sides of the descent, and found that I could venture to trust myself to the irregular projections or ledges, at least for some way. I left the cage and clambered down. As I drew near and nearer to the light, the chasm became wider, and at last I saw, to my unspeakable amaze, a broad level road at the bottom of the abyss, illumined as far as the eye could reach by what seemed artificial gas-lamps placed at regular intervals, as in the thoroughfare of a great city; and I heard confusedly at a distance a hum as of human voices. I know, of course, that no rival miners are at work in this district. Whose could be those voices? What human hands could have levelled that road and marshalled those lamps?

"The superstitious belief, common to miners, that gnomes or fiends dwell within the bowels of the earth, began to seize me. I shuddered at the thought of descending further and braving the inhabitants of this nether valley. Nor indeed could I have done so without ropes, as from the spot I had reached to the bottom of the chasm the sides of the rock sank down abrupt, smooth, and sheer. I retraced my steps with some difficulty. Now I have told you all."

"You will descend again?"

"I ought, yet I feel as if I durst not."

"A trusty companion halves the journey and doubles the courage. I will go with you. We will provide ourselves with ropes of suitable length and strength—and—pardon me—you must not drink more to-night. Our hands and feet must be steady and firm to-morrow."

CHAPTER II.

With the morning my friend's nerves were rebraced, and he was not less excited by curiosity than myself. Perhaps more; for he evidently believed in his own story, and I felt considerable doubt of it: not that he would have wilfully told an untruth, but that I thought he must have been under one of those hallucinations which seize on our fancy or our nerves in solitary, unaccustomed places, and in which we give shape to the formless and sound to the dumb.

We selected six veteran miners to watch our descent; and as the cage held only one at a time, the engineer descended first; and when he had gained the ledge at which he had before halted, the cage re-arose for me. I soon gained his side. We had provided ourselves with a strong coil of rope.

The light struck on my sight as it had done the day before on my friend's. The hollow through which it came sloped diagonally: it seemed to me a diffused atmospheric light, not like that from fire, but soft and silvery, as from a northern star. Quitting the cage, we descended, one after the other, easily enough, owing to the juts in the side, till we reached the place at which my friend had previously halted, and which was a projection just spacious enough to allow us to stand abreast. From this spot the chasm widened rapidly like the lower end of a vast funnel, and I saw distinctly the valley, the road, the lamps which my companion had described. He had exaggerated nothing. I heard the sounds he had heard—a mingled indescribable hum as of voices and a dull tramp as of feet. Straining my eye farther down, I clearly beheld at a distance the outline of some large building. It could not be mere natural rock, it was too symmetrical, with huge heavy Egyptian-like columns, and the whole lighted as from within. I had about me a small pocket-telescope, and by the aid of this I could distinguish, near the building I mention, two forms which seemed human, though I could not be sure. At least they were living, for they moved, and both vanished within the building. We now proceeded to attach the end of the rope we had brought with us to the ledge on which we stood, by the aid of clamps and grappling-hooks, with which, as well as with necessary tools, we were provided.

We were almost silent in our work. We toiled like men afraid to speak to each other. One end of the rope being thus apparently made firm to the ledge, the other, to which we fastened a fragment of the rock, rested on the ground below, a distance of some fifty feet. I was a younger and a more active man than my companion, and having served on board ship in my boyhood, this mode of transit was more familiar to me than to him. In a whisper I claimed the precedence, so that when I gained the ground I might serve to hold the rope more steady for his descent. I got safely to the ground beneath, and the engineer now began to lower himself. But he had scarcely accomplished ten feet of the descent, when the fastenings which we had fancied so secure, gave way, or rather the rock itself proved treacherous and crumbled beneath the strain; and the unhappy man was precepitated to the bottom, falling just at my feet, and bringing down with his fall splinters of the rock, one of which, fortunately but a small one, struck and for the time stunned me.

When I recovered my senses I saw my companion an inanimate mass beside me, life utterly extinct. While I was bending over his corpse in grief and horror, I heard close at hand a strange sound between a snort and a hiss; and turning instinctively to the quarter from which it came, I saw emerging from a dark fissure in the rock a vast and terrible head, with open jaws and dull, ghastly, hungry eyes—the head of a monstrous reptile resembling that of the crocodile or alligator, but infinitely larger than the largest creature of that kind I had ever beheld in my travels. I started to my feet and fled down the valley at my utmost speed. I stopped at last, ashamed of my panic and my flight, and returned to the spot on which I had left the body of my friend. It was gone; doubtless the monster had already drawn it into its den and devoured it. The rope and the grappling-hooks still lay where they had fallen, but they afforded me no chance of return: it was impossible to re-attach them to the rock above, and the sides of the rock were too sheer and smooth for human steps to clamber. I was alone in this strange world, amidst the bowels of the earth.

CHAPTER III.

Slowly and cautiously I went my solitary way down the lamplit road and towards the large building I have described. The road itself seemed like a great Alpine pass, skirting rocky mountains of which the one through whose chasms I had descended formed a link. Deep below to the left lay a vast valley, which presented to my astonished eye the unmistakable evidences of art and culture. There were fields covered with a strange vegetation, similar to none I have seen above the earth; the color of it not green, but rather of a dull leaden hue or of a golden red.

There were lakes and rivulets which seemed to have been curved into artificial banks; some of pure water, others that shone like pools of naphtha. At my right hand, ravines and defiles opened amidst the rocks, with passes between, evidently constructed by art, and boarded by trees resembling, for the most part, gigantic ferns, with exquisite varieties of feathery foliage, and stems like those of the palm-tree. Others were more like the cane-plant, but taller, bearing large clusters of flowers. Others, again, had the form of enormous fungi, with short thick stems supporting a wide dome-like roof, from which either rose or drooped long slender branches. The whole scene behind, before, and beside me, far as the eye could reach, was brilliant with innumerable lamps. The world without a sun was bright and warm as an Italian landscape at noon, but the air less oppressive, the heat softer. Nor was the scene before me void of signs of habitation. I could distinguish at a distance, whether on the banks of lake or rivulet, or half-way upon eminenees, embedded amidst the vegetation, buildings that must surely be the homes of men. I could even discover, though far off, forms that appeared to me human moving amidst the landscape. As I paused to gaze, I saw to the right, gliding quickly through the air, what appeared a small boat, impelled by sails shaped like wings. It soon passed out of sight, descending amidst the shades of a forest. Right above me there was no sky, but only a cavernous roof. This roof grew higher and higher at the distance of the landscapes beyond, till it became imperceptible, as an atmosphere of haze formed itself beneath.

Continuing my walk, I started,—from a bush that resembled a great tangle of seaweeds, interspersed with fern-like shrubs and plants of large leafage shaped like that of the aloe or prickly pear,—a curious animal about the size and shape of a deer. But as, after bounding away a few paces, it turned round and gazed at me inquisitively, I perceived that it was not like any species of deer now extant above the earth, but it brought instantly to my recollection a plaster cast I had seen in some museum of a variety of the elk stag, said to have existed before the Deluge. The creature seemed tame enough, and, after inspecting me a moment or two, began to graze on the singular herbage around undismayed and careless.

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CHAPTER IV.

I NOW came in full sight of the building. Yes, it had been made by hands, and hollowed partly out of a great rock. I should have supposed it at the first glance to have been of the earliest form of Egyptian architecture. It was fronted by huge columns, tapering upward from massive plinths, and with capitals that, as I came nearer, I perceived to be more ornamental and more fantastically graceful than Egyptian architecture allows. As the Corinthian capital mimics the leaf of the acanthus, so the capitals of these columns imitated the foliage of the vegetation neighboring them, some aloe-like, some fern-like. And now there came out of this building a form—human;—was it human? It stood on the broad way and looked around, beheld me and approached. It came within a few yards of me, and at the sight and presence of it an indescribable awe and tremor seized me, rooting my feet to the ground. It reminded me of symbolical images of Genius or Demon that are seen on Etruscan vases or limned on the walls of Eastern sepulchres—images that borrow the outlines of man, and are yet of another race. It was tall, not gigantic, but tall as the tallest men below the height of giants.

Its chief covering seemed to me to be composed of large wings folded over its breast and reaching to its knees; the rest of its attire was composed of an under tunic and leggings of some thin fibrous material. It wore on its head a kind of tiara than shone with jewels, and carried in its right hand a slender staff of bright metal like polished steel. But the face! it was that which inspired my awe and my terror. It was the face of man, but yet of a type of man distinct from our own extant races. The nearest approach to it in outline and expression is the face of the sculptured sphinx—so regular in its calm, intellectual, mysterious beauty. Its color was peculiar, more like that of the red man than any other variety of our species, and yet different from it—a richer and a softer hue, with large black eyes, deep and brilliant, and brows arched as a semicircle. The face was beardless; but a nameless something in the aspect, tranquil though the expression, and beauteous though the features, roused that instinct of danger which the sight of a tiger or serpent arouses. I felt that this manlike image was endowed with forces inimical to man. As it drew near, a cold shudder came over me. I fell on my knees and covered my face with my hands.

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CHAPTER V.

A VOICE accosted me—a very quiet and very musical key of voice—in a language of which I could not understand a word, but it served to dispel my fear. I uncovered my face and looked up. The stranger (I could scarcely bring myself to call him man) surveyed me with an eye that seemed to read to the very depths of my heart. He then placed his left hand on my forehead, and with the staff in his right gently touched my shoulder. The effect of this double contact was magical. In place of my former terror there passed into me a sense of contentment, of joy, of confidence in myself and in the being before me. I rose and spoke in my own language. He listened to me with apparent attention, but with a slight surprise in his looks; and shook his head, as if to signify that I was not understood. He then took me by the hand and led me in silence to the building. The entrance was open—indeed there was no door to it. We entered an immense hall, lighted by the same kind of lustre as in the scene without, but diffusing a fragrant odor. The floor was in large tesselated blocks of precious metals, and partly covered with a sort of matlike carpeting. A

strain of low music, above and around, undulated as if from invisible instruments, seeming to belong naturally to the place, just as the sound of murmuring waters belongs to a rocky landscape, or the warble of birds to vernal groves.

A figure, in a simpler garb than that of my guide, but of similar fashion, was standing motionless near the threshold. My guide touched it twice with his staff, and it put itself into a rapid and gliding movement, skimming noiselessly over the floor. Gazing on it, I then saw that it was no living form, but a mechanical automaton. It might be two minutes after it vanished through a doorless opening, half screened by curtains at the other end of the hall, when through the same opening advanced a boy of about twelve years old, with features closely resembling those of my guide, so that they seemed to me evidently son and father. On seeing me the child uttered a cry, and lifted a staff like that borne by my guide, as if in menace. At a word from the elder he dropped it. The two then conversed for some moments, examining me while they spoke. The child touched my garments and stroked my face with evident curiosity, uttering a sound like a laugh, but with an hilarity more subdued than the mirth of our laughter. Presently the roof of the hall opened, and a platform descended, seemingly constructed on the same principle as the "lifts" used in hotels and warehouses for mounting from one story to another.

The stranger placed himself and the child on the platform, and motioned to me to do the same, which I did. We ascended quickly and safely, and alighted in the midst of a corridor with doorways on either side.

Through one of these doorways I was conducted into a chamber fitted up with an Oriental splendor; the walls were tesselated with spars, and metals, and uncut jewels; cushions and divans abounded; apertures as for windows, but unglazed, were made in the chamber, opening to the floor; and as I passed along I observed that these openings led into spacious balconies, and commanded views of the illumined landscape without. In cages suspended from the ceiling there were birds of strange form and bright plumage, which at our entrance set up a chorus of song, modulated into tune as is that of our piping bullfinches. A delicious fragrance, from censers of gold elaborately sculptured, filled the air. Several automata, like the one I had seen, stood dumb and motionless by the walls. The stranger placed me beside him on a divan, and again spoke to me, and again I spoke, but without the least advance towards understanding each other.

But now I began to feel the effects of the blow I received from the splinters of the falling rock more acutely than I had done at first.

There came over me a sense of sickly faintness, accompanied with acute, lancinating pains in the head and neck. I sank back on the seat, and strove in vain to stifle a groan. On this the child, who had hitherto seemed to eye me with distrust or dislike, knelt by my side to support me; taking one of my hands in both his own, he approached his lips to my forehead, breathing on it softly. In a few moments my pain ceased; a drowsy, happy calm crept over me; I fell asleep.

How long I remained in this state I know not, but when I woke I felt perfectly restored. My eyes opened upon a group of silent forms, seated around me in the gravity and quietude of Orientals—all more or less like the first stranger; the same mantling wings, the same fashion of garment, the same sphinx-like faces, with the deep dark eyes and red man's color; above all, the same type of race—race akin to man's, but infinitely stronger of form and grander of aspect, and inspiring the same unutterable feeling of dread. Yet each countenance was mild and tranquill, and even kindly in its expression. And strangely enough, it seemed to me that in this very calm and benignity consisted the secret of the dread which the countenances inspired. They seemed as void of the lines and shadows which care and sorrow, and passion and sin, leave upon the faces of men, as are the faces of sculptured gods, or as, in the eyes of Christian mourners, seem the peaceful brows of the dead.

I felt a warm hand on my shoulder; it was the child's. In his eyes there was a sort of lofty pity and tenderness, such as that with which we may gaze on some suffering bird or butterfly. I shrank from that touch—I shrank from that eye. I was vaguely impressed with a belief that, had he so pleased, that child could have killed me as easily as a man can kill a bird or a butterfly. The child seemed pained at my repugnance, quitted me and

placed himself beside one of the windows. The others continued to converse with each other in a low tone, and by their glances towards me I could perceive that I was the object of their conversation. One in especial seemed to be urging some proposal affecting me on the being whom I had first met, and this last by his gesture seemed about to assent to it, when the child suddenly quitted his post by the window, placed himself between me and the other forms, as if in protection, and spoke quickly and eagerly. By some intuition or instinct I felt that the child I had before so dreaded was pleading in my behalf. Ere he had ceased another stranger entered the room. He appeared older than the rest, though not old; his countenance, less smoothly serene than theirs, though equally regular in its features, seemed to me to have more the touch of a humanity akin to my own. He listened quietly to the words addressed to him, first by my guide, next by two others of the group, and lastly by the child; then turned towards myself, and addressed me, not by words, but by signs and gestures. These I fancied that I perfectly understood, and I was not mistaken. I comprehended that he inquired whence I came. I extended my arm and pointed towards the road which had led me from the chasm in the rock; then an idea seized me. I drew forth my pocket-book and sketched on one of its blank leaves a rough design of the ledge of the rock, the rope, myself clinging to it; then of the cavernous rock below, the head of the reptile, the lifeless form of my friend. I gave this primitive kind of hieroglyph to my interrogator, who, after inspecting it gravely, handed it to his next neighbor, and it thus passed round the group. The being I had at first encountered then said a few words, and the child, who approached and looked at my drawing, nodded as if he comprehended its purport, and returning to the window, expanded the wings attached to his form, shook them once or twice, and then launched himself into space without. I started up in amaze and hastened to the window. The child was already in the air, buoyed on his wings, which he did not flap to and fro as a bird does, but which were elevated over his head, and seem to bear him steadily aloft without effort of his own. His flight seemed as swift as any eagles's; and I observed that it was towards the rock whence I had descended, of which the outline loomed visible in the brilliant atmosphere. In a very few minutes he returned, skimming through the opening from which he had gone, and dropping on the floor the rope and grappling hooks I had left at the descent from the chasm. Some words in a low tone passed between the beings present: one of the group touched an automaton, which started forward and glided from the room; then the last comer, who had addressed me by gestures, rose, took me by the hand, and led me into the corridor. There the platform by which I had mounted awaited us; we placed ourselves on it and were lowered into the hall below. My new companion, still holding me by the hand, conducted me from the building into a street (so to speak) that stretched beyond it, with buildings on either side; separated from each other by gardens bright with rich-colored vegetation and strange flowers. Interspersed amidst these gardens, which were divided from each other by low walls, or walking slowly along the road, were many forms similar to those I had already seen. Some of the passers-by, on observing me, approached my guide, evidently by their tones, looks, and gestures addressing to him inquiries about myself. In a few moments a crowd collected around us, examining me with great interest, as if I were some rare wild animal. Yet even in gratifying their curiosity they preserved a grave and courteous demeanor; and after a few words from my guide, who seemed to me to deprecate obstruction in our road, they fell back with a stately inclination of head, and resumed their own way with tranquil indifference. Midway in this thoroughfare we stopped at a building that differed from those we had hitherto passed, inasmuch as it formed three sides of a vast court, at the angles of which were lofty pyramidal towers; in the open space between the sides was a circular fountain of colossal dimensions, and throwing up a dazzling spray of what seemed to me fire. We entered the building through an open doorway and came into an enormous hall, in which were several groups of children, all apparently employed in work as at some great factory. There was a huge engine in the wall which was in full play, with wheels and cylinders, and resembling our own steam-engines, except that it was richly ornamented with precious stones and metals, and appeared to emit a pale

phosphorescent atmosphere of shifting light. Many of the children were at some mysterious work on this machinery, others were seated before tables. I was not allowed to linger long enough to examine into the nature of their employment. Not one young voice was heard—not one young face turned to gaze on us. They were all still and indifferent as may be ghosts, through the midst of which pass unnoticed the forms of the living.

Quitting this hall, my guide led me through a gallery richly painted in compartments, with a barbaric mixture of gold in the colors, like pictures by Louis Cranach. The subjects described on these walls appeared to my glance as intended to illustrate events in the history of the race amidst which I was admitted. In all there were figures, most of them like the manlike creatures I had seen, but not all in the same fashion of garb, nor all with wings. There were also the effigies of various animals and birds wholly strange to me, with backgrounds depicting landscapes or buildings. So far as my imperfect knowledge of the pictorial art would allow me to form an opinion, these paintings seemed very accurate in design and very rich in coloring, showing a perfect knowledge of perspective, but their details not arranged according to the rules of composition acknowledged by our artists—wanting, as it were, a centre; so that the effect was vague, scattered, confused, bewildering—they were like heterogeneous fragments of a dream of art.

We now came into a room of moderate size, in which was assembled what I afterwards knew to be the family of my guide, seated at a table spread as for repast. The forms thus grouped were those of my guide's wife, his daughter, and two sons. I recognized at once the difference between the two sexes, though the two females were of taller stature and ampler proportions than the males; and their countenances, if still more symmetrical in outline and contour, were devoid of the softness and timidity of expression which give charm to the face of woman as seen on the earth above. The wife wore no wings, the daughter wore wings longer than those of the males.

My guide uttered a few words, on which all the persons seated rose, and with that peculiar mildness of look and manner which I have before noticed, and which is, in truth, the common attribute of this formidable race, they saluted me according to their fashion, which consists in laying the right hand very gently on the head and uttering a soft sibilant monosyllable—S.Si, equivalent to "Welcome."

The mistress of the house then seated me beside her, and heaped a golden platter before me from one of the dishes.

While I ate (and though the viands were new to me, I marvelled more at the delicacy than the strangeness of their flavor), my companions conversed quietly, and, so far as I could detect, with polite avoidance of any direct reference to myself, or any obstrusive scrutiny of my appearance. Yet I was the first creature of that variety of the human race to which I belong that they had ever beheld, and was consequently regarded by them as a most curious and abnormal phenomenon. But all rudeness is unknown to this people, and the youngest child is taught to despise any vehement emotional demonstration. When the meal was ended, my guide again took me by the hand, and, re-entering the gallery, touched a metallic plate inscribed with strange figures, and which I rightly conjectured to be of the nature of our telegraphs. A platform descended, but this time we mounted to a much greater height than in the former building, and found ourselves in a room of moderate dimensions, and which in its general character had much that might be familiar to the associations of a visitor from the upper world. There were shelves on the wall containing what appeared to be books, and indeed were so; mostly very small, like our diamond duodecimos, shaped in the fashion of our volumes, and bound in fine sheets of metal. There were several curious-looking pieces of mechanism scattered about, apparently models, such as might be seen in the study of any professional mechanician. Four automata (mechanical contrivances which, with these people, answer the ordinary purposes of domestic service) stood phantom-like at each angle in the wall. In a recess was a low couch, or bed with pillows. A window, with curtains of some fibrous material drawn aside, opened upon a large balcony. My host stepped out into the balcony; I followed him. We were on the uppermost storey of one of the angular pyramids; the view beyond was of a wild and solemn beauty impossible to describe,—the vast ranges of precipitous rock which formed the distant

background, the intermediate valleys of mystic many-colored herbage, the flash of waters, many of them like streams of roseate flame, the serene lustre diffused over all by myriads of lamps, combined to form a whole of which no words of mine can convey adequate description; so splendid was it, yet so sombre; so lovely, yet so awful.

But my attention was soon diverted from these nether landscapes. Suddenly there arose, as from the streets below, a burst of joyous music; then a winged form soared into the space; another, as in chase of the first, another and another; others after others, till the crowd grew thick and the number countless. But how describe the fantastic grace of these forms in their undulating movements! They appeared engaged in some sport or amusement; now forming into opposite squadrons; now scattering; now each group threading the other, soaring, descending, interweaving, severing; all in measured time to the music below, as if in the dance of the fabled Peri.

I turned my gaze on my host in a feverish wonder. I ventured to place my hand on the large wings that lay folded on his breast, and in doing so a slight shock as of electricity passed through me. I recoiled in fear; my host smiled, and, as if courteously to gratify my curiosity, slowly expanded his pinions. I observed that his garment beneath then became dilated as a bladder that fills with air. The arms seemed to slide into the wings, and in another moment he had launched himself into the luminous atmosphere, and hovered there, still, and with outspread wings, as an eagle that basks in the sun. Then, rapidly as an eagle swoops, he rushed downwards into the midst of one of the groups, skimming through the midst, and as suddenly again soaring aloft. Thereon, three forms, in one of which I thought to recognize my host's daughter, detached themselves from the rest, and followed him as a bird sportively follows a bird. My eyes, dazzled with the lights and bewildered by the throngs, ceased to distinguish the gyrations and evolutions of these winged playmates, till presently my host re-emerged from the crowd and alighted at my side.

The strangeness of all I had seen began now to operate fast on my senses; my mind itself began to wander. Though not inclined to be superstitious, nor hitherto believing that man could be brought into bodily communication with demons, I felt the terror and the wild excitement with which, in the Gothic ages, a traveller might have persuaded himself that he witnessed a *sabbat* of fiends and witches. I have a vague recollection of having attempted with vehement gesticulation, and forms of exorcism, and loud incoherent words to repel my courteous and indulgent host; of his mild endeavors to calm and soothe me; of his intelligent conjecture that my fright and bewilderment were occasioned by the difference of form and movement between us which the wings that had excited my marvelling curiosity had, in exercise, made still more strongly perceptible; of the gentle smile with which he had sought to dispel my alarm by dropping the wings to the ground, and endeavoring to show me that they were but a mechanical contrivance. That sudden transformation did but increase my horror; and as extreme fright often shows itself by extreme daring, I sprang at his throat like a wild beast. On an instant I was felled to the ground as by an electric shock; and the last confused images floating before my sight ere I became wholly insensible, were the form of my host kneeling beside me with one hand on my forehead, and the beautiful calm face of his daughter, with large, deep, inscrutable eyes intently fixed upon my own.

CHAPTER VI.

I REMAINED in this unconscious state, as I afterwards learned, for many days, even for some weeks, according to our computation of time. When I recovered I was in a strange room, my host and all his family were gathered round me, and to my utter amaze my host's daughter accosted me in my own language with but a slightly foreign accent.

"How do you feel?" she asked.

It was some moments before I could overcome my surprise enough to falter out, "You know my language? How? Who and what are you?"

My host smiled and motioned to one of his sons, who then took from a table a number of thin metallic sheets on which were traced drawings of various figures—a house, a tree, a bird, a man, etc.

In these designs I recognized my own style of drawing. Under each figure was written the name of it in my language, and in my writing; and in another handwriting a word strange to me beneath it.

Said the host, "Thus we began; and my daughter Zee, who belongs to the College of Sages, has been your instructress and ours too."

Zee then placed before me other metallic sheets, on which, in my writing, words first, and then sentences, were inscribed. Under each word and each sentence strange characters in another hand. Rallying my senses, I comprehended that thus a rude dictionary had been effected. Had it been done while I was dreaming? "That is enough now," said Zee, in a tone of command. "Repose and take food."

CHAPTER VII.

A ROOM to myself was assigned to me in this vast edifice. It was prettily and fantastically arranged, but without any of the splendor of metal work or gems which was displayed in the more public apartments. The walls were hung with a variegated matting made from the stalks and fibres of plants, and the floor carpeted with the same.

The bed was without curtains, its supports of iron resting on balls of crystal; the coverings, of a thin white substance resembling cotton. There were sundry shelves containing books. A curtained recess communicated with an aviary filled with singing-birds, of which I did not recognize one resembling those I have seen on earth, except a beautiful species of dove, though this was distinguished from our doves by a tall crest of bluish plumes. All these birds had been trained to sing in artful tunes, and greatly exceeded the skill of our piping bullfinches, which can rarely achieve more than two tunes, and cannot, I believe, sing those in concert. One might have supposed one's self at an opera in listening to the voices in my aviary. There were duets and trios, and quartettes and choruses, all arranged as in one piece of music. Did I want to silence the birds? I had but to draw a curtain over the aviary, and their song hushed as they found themselves in the dark. Another opening formed a window, not glazed, but on touching a spring, a shutter ascended from the floor, formed of some substance less transparent than glass, but still sufficiently pellucid to allow a softened view of the scene without. To this window was attached a balcony, or rather hanging-garden, wherein grew many graceful plants and brilliant flowers. The apartment and its appurtenances had thus a character, if strange in detail, still familiar, as a whole, to modern notions of luxury, and would have excited admiration if found attached to the apartments of an English duchess or a fashionable French author. Before I arrived this was Zee's chamber; she had hospitably assigned it to me.

Some hours after the waking up which is described in my last chapter, I was lying alone on my couch trying to fix my thoughts on conjecture as to the nature and genus of the people amongst whom I was thrown, when my host and his daughter Zee entered the room.

My host, still speaking my native language, inquired, with much politeness, whether it would be agreeable to me to converse, or if I preferred solitude. I replied, that I should feel much honored and obliged by the opportunity offered me to express my gratitude for the hospitality and civilities I had received in a country to which I was a stranger, and to learn enough of its customs and manners not to offend through ignorance.

As I spoke, I had of course risen from my couch; but Zee, much to my confusion, curtly ordered me to lie down again, and there was something in her voice and eye, gentle as both were, that compelled my obedience. She then seated herself unconcernedly at the foot of my bed, while her father took his place on a divan a few feet distant.

"But what part of the world do you come from," asked my host, "that we should appear so strange to you, and you to us? I have seen individual specimens of nearly all the races differing from our own, except the primeval savages, who dwell in the most desolate and remote recesses of uncultivated nature, unacquainted with other light than that they obtain from volcanic fires, and contented to grope their way in the dark, as do many creeping, crawling, and even flying things. But certainly you cannot be a member of those barbarous tribes, nor, on

the other hand, do you seem to belong to any civilized people."

I was somewhat nettled at this last observation, and replied that I had the honor to belong to one of the most civilized nations of the earth; and that, as far as light was concerned, while I admired the ingenuity and disregard of expense with which my host and his fellow-citizens had contrived to illumine the regions unpenetrated by the rays of the sun, yet I could not conceive how any who had once beheld the orbs of heaven could compare to their lustre the artificial lights invented by the necessities of man. But my host said he had seen specimens of most of the races differing from his own, save the wretched barbarians he had mentioned. Now, was it possible that he had never been on the surface of the earth, or could he only be referring to communities buried within its entrails?

My host was for some moments silent; his countenance showed a degree of surprise which the people of that race very rarely manifest under any circumstances, howsoever extraordinary. But Zee was more intelligent, and exclaimed, "So you see, my father, that there is truth in the old tradition; there always is truth in every tradition commonly believed in all times and by all tribes."

"Zee," said my host, mildly, "you belong to the College of Sages, and ought to be wiser than I am; but, as chief of the Light-preserving Council, it is my duty to take nothing for granted till it is proved to the evidence of my own senses." Then, turning to me, he asked me several questions about the surface of the earth and the heavenly bodies; upon which, though I answered him to the best of my knowledge, my answers seemed not to satisfy nor convince him. He shook his head quietly, and, changing the subject rather abruptly, asked how I had come down from what he was pleased to call one world to the other. I answered, that under the surface of the earth there were mines containing minerals, or metals, essential to our wants and our progress in all arts and industries; and I then briefly explained the manner in which, while exploring one of these mines, I and my ill-fated friend had obtained a glimpse of the regions into which we had descended, and how the descent had cost him his life; appealing to the rope and grappling-hooks that the child had brought to the house in which I had been at first received, as a witness of the truthfulness of my story.

My host then proceeded to question me as to the habits and modes of life among the races on the upper earth, more especially among those considered to be the most advanced in that civilization which he was pleased to define "the art of diffusing throughout a community the tranquil happiness which belongs to a virtuous and well-ordered household." Naturally desiring to represent in the most favorable colors the world from which I came, I touched but slightly, though indulgently, on the antiquated and decaying institutions of Europe, in order to expatiate on the present grandeur and prospective preeminence of that glorious American Republic, in which Europe envioulY seeks its model and tremblingly foresees its doom. Selecting for an example of the social life of the United States that city in which progress advances at the fastest rate, I indulged in an animated description of the moral habits of New York. Mortified to see, by the faces of my listeners, that I did not make the favorable impression I had anticipated, I elevated my theme; dwelling on the excellence of democratic institutions, their promotion of tranquil happiness by the government of party, and the mode in which they diffused such happiness throughout the community by preferring, for the exercise of power and the acquisition of honors, the lowliest citizens in point of property, education, and character. Fortunately recollecting the peroration of a speech, on the purifying influences of American democracy and their destined spread over the world, made by a certain eloquent senator (for whose vote in the Senate a Railway Company, to which my two brothers belonged, had just paid 20,000 dollars), I wound up by repeating its glowing predictions of the magnificent future that smiled upon mankind—when the flag of freedom should float over an entire continent, and two hundred millions of intelligent citizens, accustomed from infancy to the daily use of revolvers, should apply to a cowering universe the doctrine of the Patriot Monroe.

When I had concluded, my host gently shook his head, and fell into a musing study, making a sign to me and his daughter to remain silent while he reflected. And after a

time he said, in a very earnest and solemn tone, "If you think, as you say, that you, though a stranger, have received kindness at the hands of me and mine, I adjure you to reveal nothing to any other of our people respecting the world from which you came, unless, on consideration, I give you permission to do so. Do you consent to this request?"

"Of course I pledge my word to it," said I, somewhat amazed; and I extended my right hand to grasp his. But he placed my hand gently on his forehead and his own right hand on my breast, which is the custom among this race in all matters of promise or verbal obligations. Then, turning to his daughter, he said, "And you, Zee, will not repeat to any one what the stranger has said, or may say, to me or to you, of a world other than our own." Zee rose and kissed her father on the temples, saying, with a smile, "A Gy's tongue is wanton, but love can fetter it fast. And if, my father, you fear lest a chance word from me or yourself could expose our community to danger, by a desire to explore a world beyond us, will not a wave of the *vril*, properly impelled, wash even the memory of what we have heard the stranger say out of the tablets of the brain?"

"What is vril?" I asked.

Therewith Zee began to enter into an explanation of which I understood very little, for there is no word in any language I know which is an exact synonym for vril. I should call it electricity, except that it comprehends in its manifold branches other forces of nature, to which, in our scientific nomenclature, differing names are assigned, such as magnetism, galvanism, etc. These people consider that in vril they have arrived at the unity in natural energic agencies, which has been conjectured by many philosophers above ground, and which Faraday thus intimates under the more cautious term of correlation:—

"I have long held an opinion," says that illustrious experimentalist, "almost amounting to a conviction, in common, I believe, with many other lovers of natural knowledge, that the various forms under which the forces of matter are made manifest have one common origin; or, in other words, are so directly related and mutually dependent, that they are convertible, as it were, into one another, and possess equivalents of power in their action."

These subterranean philosophers assert that, by one operation of vril, which Faraday would perhaps call "atmospheric magnetism," they can influence the variations of temperature—in plain words, the weather; that by other operations, akin to those ascribed to mesmerism, electro-biology, odic force, etc., but applied scientifically through vril conductors, they can exercise influence over minds, and bodies animal and vegetable, to an extent not surpassed in the romances of our mystics. To all such agencies they give the common name of vril. Zee asked me if, in my world, it was not known that all the faculties of the mind could be quickened to a degree unknown in the waking state, by trance or vision, in which the thoughts of one brain could be transmitted to another, and knowledge be thus rapidly interchange. I replied, that there were among us stories told of such trance or vision, and that I had heard much and seen something of the mode in which they were artifically effected, as in mesmeric clairvoyance; but that these practices had fallen much into disuse or contempt, partly because of the gross impostures to which they had been made subservient, and partly because, even where the effects upon certain abnormal constitutions were genuinely produced, the effects, when fairly examined and analyzed, were very unsatisfactory—not to be relied upon for any systematic truthfulness or any practical purpose, and rendered very mischievous to credulous persons by the superstitions they tended to produce.

Zee received my answers with much benignant attention, and said that similiar instances of abuse and credulity had been familiar to their own scientific experience in the infancy of their knowledge, and while the properties of vril were misapprehended, but that she reserved further discussion on this subject till I was more fitted to enter into it. She contented herself with adding, that it was through the agency of vril, while I had been placed in the state of trance, that I had been made acquainted with the rudiments of their language; and that she and her father, who, alone of the family, took the pains to watch the experiment, had acquired a greater proportionate knowledge of my language than I of their own; partly because my language was much simpler than theirs, comprising far less of complex ideas; and partly because their organization was, by hereditary culture, much more ductile and more

readily capable of acquiring knowledge than mine. At this I secretly demurred; and having had, in the course of a practical life, to sharpen my wits, whether at home or in travel, I could not allow that my cerebral organization could possibly be duller than that of people who had lived all their lives by lamplight. However, while I was thus thinking, Zee quietly pointed her forefinger at my forehead and sent me to sleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

When I once more awoke I saw by my bedside the child who had brought the rope and grappling-hooks to the house in which I had been first received, and which, as I afterwards learned, was the residence of the chief magistrate of the tribe. The child, whose name was Taë (pronounced Tar-ee), was the magistrate's eldest son. I found that during my last sleep or trance I had made still greater advance in the language of the country, and could converse with comparative ease and fluency.

This child was singularly handsome, even for the beautiful race to which he belonged, with a countenance very manly in aspect for his years, and with a more vivacious and energetic expression than I had hitherto seen in the serene and passionless faces of the men. He brought me the tablet on which I had drawn the mode of my descent, and had also sketched the head of the horrible reptile that had scared me from my friend's corpse. Pointing to that part of the drawing, Taë put to me a few questions respecting the size and form of the monster, and the cave or chasm from which it had emerged. His interest in my answers seemed so grave as to divert him for a while from any curiosity as to myself or any antecedents. But to my great embarrassment, seeing how I was pledged to my host, he was just beginning to ask me where I came from, when Zee fortunately entered, and, overhearing him, said, "Taë, give to our guest any information he may desire, but ask none from him in return. To question him who he is, whence he comes, or wherefore he is here, would be a breach of the law which my father has laid down for this house."

"So be it," said Taë, pressing his hand to his heart; and from that moment, till the one in which I saw him last, this child, with whom I became very intimate, never once put to me any of the questions thus interdicted.

CHAPTER IX.

It was not for some time, and until, by repeated trances, if they are so to be called, my mind became better prepared to interchange ideas with my entertainers, and more fully to comprehend differences of manners and customs, at first too strange to my experience to be seized by my reason, that I was enabled to gather the following details respecting the origin and history of this subterranean population, as portion of one great family race called the Ana.

According to the earliest traditions, the remote progenitors of the race had once tenanted a world above the surface of that in which their descendants dwelt. Myths of that world were still preserved in their archives, and in those myths were legends of a vaulted dome in which the lamps were lighted by no human hand. But such legends were considered by most commentators as allegorical fables. According to these traditions the earth itself, at the date to which the traditions ascend, was not indeed in its infancy, but in the throes and travail of transition from one form of development to another, and subject to many violent revolutions of nature. By one of such revolutions, that portion of the upper world inhabited by the ancestors of this race had been subjected to inundations, not rapid, but gradual and uncontrollable, in which all, save a scanty remnant, were submerged and perished. Whether this be a record of our historical and sacred Deluge, or of some earlier one contended for by geologists, I do not pretend to conjecture; though, according to the chronology of this people as compared with that of Newton, it must have been many thousands of years before the time of Noah. On the other hand, the account of these writers does not harmonize with the opinions most in vogue among geological authorities, inasmuch as it places the existence of a human race upon earth at dates long anterior to that assigned to the terrestrial formation adapted to the introduction of mammalia. A

band of the ill-fated race, thus invaded by the Flood, had, during the march of the waters, taken refuge in caverns amidst the loftier rocks, and, wandering through these hollows, they lost sight of the upper world for ever. Indeed, the whole face of the earth had been changed by this great revulsion; land had been turned into sea—sea into land. In the bowels of the inner earth even now, I was informed as a positive fact might be discovered the remains of human habitation—habitation not in huts and caverns, but in vast cities whose ruins attest the civilization of races which flourished before the age of Noah, and are not to be classified with those genera to which philosophy ascribes the use of flint and the ignorance of iron.

The fugitives had carried with them the knowledge of the arts they had practised above ground—arts of culture and civilization. Their earliest want must have been that of supplying below the earth the light they had lost above it; and at no time, even in the traditional period, do the races, of which the one I now sojourned with formed a tribe, seem to have been unacquainted with the art of extracting light from gases, or manganese, or petroleum. They had been accustomed in their former state to contend with the rude forces of nature; and indeed the lengthened battle they had fought with their conqueror Ocean, which had taken centuries in its spread, had quickened their skill in curbing waters into dikes and channels. To this skill they owed their preservation in their new abode. "For many generations," said my host, with a sort of contempt and horror, "these primitive forefathers are said to have degraded their rank and shortened their lives by eating the flesh of animals, many varieties of which had, like themselves, escaped the Deluge, and sought shelter in the hollows of the earth; other animals, supposed to be unknown to the upper world, those hollows themselves produced."

When what we should term the historical age emerged from the twilight of tradition, the Ana were already established in different communities, and had attained to a degree of civilization very analogous to that which the more advanced nations above the earth now enjoy. They were familiar with most of our mechanical inventions, including the application of steam as well as gas. The communities were in fierce competition with each other. They had their rich and their poor; they had orators and conquerors; they made war either for a domain or an idea. Though the various states acknowledged various forms of government, free institutions were beginning to preponderate; popular assemblies increased in power; republics soon became general; the democracy to which the most enlightened European politicians look forward as the extreme goal of political advancement, and which still prevailed among other subterranean races, whom they despised as barbarians, the loftier family of Ana, to which belonged the tribe I was visiting, looked back to as one of the crude and ignorant experiments which belong to the infancy of political science. It was the age of envy and hate, of fierce passions, of constant social changes more or less violent, of strife between classes, of war between state and state. This phase of society lasted, however, for some ages, and was finally brought to a close, at least among the nobler and more intellectual populations, by the gradual discovery of the latent powers stored in the all-permeating fluid which they denominate Vril.

According to the account I received from Zee, who, as an erudite professor in the College of Sages, had studied such matters more diligently than any other member of my host's family, this fluid is capable of being raised and disciplined into the mightiest agency over all forms of matter, animate or inanimate. It can destroy like the flash of lightning; yet, differently applied, it can replenish or invigorate life, heal, and preserve; and on it they chiefly rely for the cure of disease, or rather for enabling the physical organization to re-establish the due equilibrium of its natural powers, and thereby to cure itself. By this agency they rend way through the most solid substances, and open valleys for culture through the rocks of their subterranean wilderness. From it they extract the light which supplies their lamps, finding it steadier, softer, and healthier than the other inflammable materials they had formerly used.

But the effects of the alleged discovery of the means to direct the more terrible force of vril were chiefly remarkable in their influence upon social polity. As these effects became familiarly known and skilfully administered, war between the Vril-discoverers ceased; for they

brought the art of destruction to such perfection as to annul all superiority in numbers, discipline, or military skill. The fire lodged in the hollow of a rod directed by the hand of a child could shatter the strongest fortress, or cleave its burning way from the van to the rear of an embattled host. If army met army, and both had command of this agency, it could be but to the annihilation of each. The age of war was therefore gone, but with the cessation of war other effects bearing upon the social state soon became apparent. Man was so completely at the mercy of man, each whom he encountered being able, if so willing, to slay him on the instant, that all notions of government by force gradually vanished from political systems and forms of law. It is only by force that vast communities, dispersed through great distances of space, can be kept together; but now there was no longer either the necessity of self-preservation or the pride of aggrandisement to make one state desire to preponderate in population over another.

The Vril discoverers thus, in the course of a few generations, peacefully split into communities of moderate size. The tribe amongst which I had fallen was limited to 12,000 families. Each tribe occupied a territory sufficient for all its wants, and at stated periods the surplus population departed to seek a realm of its own. There appeared no necessity for any arbitrary selection of these emigrants; there was always a sufficient number who volunteered to depart.

These subdivided states, petty if we regard either territory or population,—all appertained to one vast general family. They spoke the same language, though the dialects might slightly differ. They intermarried; they maintained the same general laws and customs; and so important a bond between these several communities was the knowledge of vril and the practice of its agencies, that the word A-Vril was synonymous with civilization; and Vril-ya, signifying "The Civilized Nations," was the common name by which the communities employing the uses of vril distinguished themselves from such of the Ana as were yet in a state of barbarism.

The government of the tribe of Vril-ya I am treating of was apparently very complicated, really very simple. It was based upon a principle recognized in theory, though little carried out in practice, above ground—viz., that the object of all systems of philosophical thought tends to the attainment of unity, or the ascent through all intervening labyrinths to the simplicity of a single first cause or principle. Thus in politics, even republican writers have agreed that a benevolent autocracy would insure the best administration, if there were any guarantees for its continuance, or against its gradual abuse of the powers accorded to it. This singular community elected therefore a single supreme magistrate styled Tur; he held his office nominally for life, but he could seldom be induced to retain it after the first approach of old age. There was, indeed, in this society nothing to induce any of its members to covet the cares of office. No honors, no insignia of higher rank, were assigned to it. The supreme magistrate was not distinguished from the rest by superior habitation or revenue. On the other hand, the duties awarded to him were marvellously light and easy, requiring no preponderant degree of energy or intelligence. There being no apprehensions of war, there were no armies to maintain; being no government of force, there was no police to appoint and direct.

What we call crime was utterly unknown to the Vril-ya; and there were no courts of criminal justice. The rare instances of civil disputes were referred for arbitration to friends chosen by either party, or decided by the Council of Sages, which will be described later. There were no professional lawyers; and indeed their laws were but amicable conventions, for there was no power to enforce laws against an offender who carried in his staff the power to destroy his judges. There were customs and regulations, to compliance with which, for several ages, the people had tacitly habituated themselves; or if in any instance an individual felt such compliance hard, he quitted the community and went elsewhere. There was, in fact, quietly established amid this state, much the same compact that is found in our private families, in which we virtually say to any independent grown-up member of the family, whom we receive and entertain, "Stay or go, according as our habits and regulations suit or displease you." But though there were no laws such as we call laws, no race above ground is so law-observing. Obedience to the rule adopted by the community has become as much an

instinct as if it were implanted by nature. Even in every household the head of it makes a regulation for its guidance, which is never resisted nor even cavilled at by those who belong to the family. They have a proverb, the pithiness of which is much lost in this paraphrase, "No happiness without order, no order without authority, no authority without unity." The mildness of all government among them, civil or domestic, may be signalized by their idiomatic expressions for such terms as illegal or forbidden—viz., "It is requested not to do so-and-so."

Poverty among the Ana is as unknown as crime; not that property is held in common, or that all are equals in the extent of their possessions or the size and luxury of their habitation: but there being no difference of rank or position between the grades of wealth or the choice of occupations, each pursues his own inclinations without creating envy or vying; some like a modest, some a more splendid kind of life; each makes himself happy in his own way. Owing to this absence of competition, and the limit placed on the population, it is difficult for a family to fall into distress; there are no hazardous speculations, no emulators striving for superior wealth and rank. No doubt, in each settlement all originally had the same proportions of land dealt out to them; but some, more adventurous than others, had extended their possessions farther into the bordering wilds, or had improved into richer fertility the produce of their fields, or entered into commerce or trade. Thus, necessarily, some had grown richer than others, but none had become absolutely poor, or wanting anything which their tastes desired. If they did so, it was always in their power to migrate, or at the worst to apply, without shame and with certainty of aid, to the rich; for all the members of the community considered themselves as brothers of one affectionate and united family. More upon this head will be treated of incidentally as my narrative proceeds.

The chief care of the supreme magistrate was to communicate with certain active departments charged with the administration of special details. The most important and essential of such details was that connected with the due provision of light. Of this department my host, Aph-Lin, was the chief. Another department, which might be called the foreign, communicated with the neighboring kindred states, principally for the purpose of ascertaining all new inventions; and to a third department, all such inventions and improvements in machinery were committed for trial. Connected with this department was the College of Sages—a college especially favored by such of the Ana as were widowed and childless, and by the young unmarried females, amongst whom Zee was the most active, and, if what we call renown or distinction was a thing acknowledged by this people (which I shall later show it is not), among the most renowned or distinguished. It is by the female Professors of this college that those studies which are deemed of least use in practical life—as purely speculative philosophy, the history of remote periods, and such sciences as entomology, conchology, etc.—are the more diligently cultivated. Zee, whose mind, active as Aristotle's, equally embraced the largest domains and the minutest details of thought, had written two volumes on the parasite insect that dwells amid the hairs of a tiger's * paw, which work was considered the best authority on that interesting subject. But the researches of the sages are not confined to such subtle or elegant studies. They comprise various others more important, and especially the properties of vril, to the perception of which their finer nervous organization renders the female Professors eminently keen. It is out of this college that the Tur, or chief magistrate, selects Councillors, limited to three, in the rare instances in which novelty of event or circumstance perplexes his own judgment.

There are a few other departments of minor consequence, but all are carried on so noiselessly and quietly that the evidence of a government seems to vanish altogether, and social order to be as regular and unobtrusive as if it were a law of nature. Machinery is employed to an inconceivable extent in all the opera-

* The animal here referred to has many points of difference from the tiger of the upper world. It is larger, and with a broader paw, and still more receding frontal. It haunts the sides of lakes and pools, and feeds principally on fishes, though it does no object to any terrestrial animal of inferior strength that comes in its way. It is becoming very scarce even in the wild districts, where it is devoured by gigantic reptiles. I apprehend that it clearly belongs to the tiger species, since the parasite animalcule found in its paw, like that found in the Asiatic tiger's, is a miniature image of itself.

tions of labor within and without doors, and it is the unceasing object of the department charged with its administration to extend its efficiency. There is no class of laborers or servants, but all who are required to assist or control the machinery are found in the children, from the time they leave the care of their mothers to the marriageable age, which they place at sixteen for the Gy-ei (the females), twenty for the Ana (the males). These children are formed into bands and sections under their own chiefs, each following the pursuits in which he is most pleased, or for which he feels himself most fitted. Some take to handicrafts, some to agriculture, some to household work, and some to the only services of danger to which the population is exposed; for the sole perils that threaten this tribe are, first, from those occasional convulsions within the earth, to foresee and guard against which tasks their utmost ingenuity—irruptions of fire and water, the storms of subterranean winds and escaping gases. At the borders of the domain, and at all places where such peril might be apprehended, viligant inspectors are stationed with telegraphic communication to the hall in which chosen sages take it by turns to hold perpetual sittings. These inspectors are always selected from the elder boys approaching the age of puberty, and on the principle that at that age observation is more acute and the physical forces more alert than at any other. The second service of danger, less grave, is in the destruction of all creatures hostile to the life, or the culture, or even the comfort, of the Ana. Of these the most formidable are the vast reptiles, of some of which antediluvian relics are preserved in our museums, and certain gigantic winged creatures, half bird, half reptile. These, together with lesser wild animals, corresponding to our tigers or venomous serpents, it is left to the younger children to hunt and destroy; because, according to the Ana, here ruthlessness is wanted, and the younger a child the more ruthlessly he will destroy. There is another class of animals in the destruction of which discrimination is to be used, and against which children of intermediate age are appointed—animals that do not threaten the life of man, but ravage the produce of his labor, varieties of the elk and deer species, and a smaller creature much akin to our rabbit, though infinitely more destructive to crops, and much more cunning in its mode of depredation. It is the first object of these appointed infants, to tame the more intelligent of such animals into respect for enclosures signalized by conspicuous landmarks, as dogs are taught to respect a larder, or even to guard the master's property. It is only where such creatures are found untamable to this extent that they are destroyed. Life is never taken away for food or for sport, and never spared where untamably inimical to the Ana. Concomitantly with these bodily services and tasks, the mental education of the children goes on till boyhood ceases. It is the general custom, then, to pass through a course of instruction at the College of Sages, in which, besides more general studies, the pupil receives special lessons in such vocation or direction of intellect as he himself selects. Some, however, prefer to pass this period of probation in travel, or to emigrate, or to settle down at once into rural or commercial pursuits. No force is put upon individual inclination.

CHAPTER X.

THE word Ana (pronounced broadly *Arna*) corresponds with our plural *men;* An (pronounced *Arn*), the singular, with *man.* The word for woman is Gy (pronounced hard, as in Guy); it forms itself into Gy-ei for the plural, but the G becomes soft in the plural, like Jy-ei. They have a proverb to the effect that this difference in pronunciation is symbolical, for that the female sex is soft collectively, but hard to deal with in the individual. The Gy-ei are in the fullest enjoyment of all the rights of equality with males, for which certain philosophers above ground contend.

In childhood they perform the offices of work and labor impartially with boys; and, indeed, in the earlier age appropriated to the destruction of animals irreclaimably hostile, the girls are frequently preferred, as being by constitution more ruthless under the influence of fear or hate. In the interval between infancy and the marriageble age familiar intercourse between the sexes is suspended. At the marriageable age it is renewed, never with worse consequences than those which attend upon marriage. All arts and vocations allotted to

the one sex are open to the other, and the Gy-ei arrogate to themselves a superiority in all those abtruse and mystical branches of reasoning, for which they say the Ana are unfitted by a duller sobriety of understanding, or the routine of their matter-of-fact occupations, just as young ladies in our own world constitute themselves authorities in the subtlest points of theological doctrine, for which few men, actively engaged in worldly business, have sufficient learning or refinement of intellect.

Whether owing to early training in gymnastic exercises or to their constitutional organization, the Gy-ei are usually superior to the Ana in physical strength (an important element in the consideration and maintenance of female rights). They attain to loftier stature, and amid their rounder proportions are embedded sinews and muscles as hardy as those of the other sex. Indeed they assert that, according to the original laws of nature, females were intended to be larger than males, and maintain this dogma by reference to the earliest formations of life in insects, and in the most ancient family of the vertebrata—viz., fishes—in both of which the females are generally large enough to make a meal of their consorts if they so desire. Above all, the Gy-ei have a readier and more concentrated power over that mysterious fluid or agency which contains the element of destruction, with a larger portion of that sagacity which comprehends dissimulation. Thus they can not only defend themselves against all aggressions from the males, but could, at any moment when he least suspected his danger, terminate the existance of an offending spouse. To the credit of the Gy-ei no instance of their abuse of this awful superiority in the art of destruction is on record for several ages. The last that occurred in the community I speak of appears (according to their chronology) to have been about two thousand years ago. A Gy, then in a fit of jealousy, slew her husband; and this abominable act inspired such terror among the males that they emigrated in a body and left all the Gy-ei to themselves. The history runs that the widowed Gy-ei, thus reduced to despair, fell upon the murderess when in her sleep (and therefore unarmed), and killed her, and then entered into a solemn obligation amongst themselves to abrogate for ever the exercise of their extreme conjugal powers, and to inculcate the same obligation for ever and ever on their female children. By this conciliatory process, a deputation despatched to the fugitive consorts succeeded in persuading many to return, but those who did return were mostly the elder ones. The younger, either from too craven a doubt of their consorts, or too high an estimate of their own merits, rejected all overtures, and, remaining in other communities, were caught up there by other mates, with whom perhaps they were no better off. But the loss of so large a portion of the male youth operated as a salutary warning on the Gy-ei, and confirmed them in the pious resolution to which they had pledged themselves. Indeed it is now popularly considered that, by long hereditary disuse, the Gy-ei have lost both the aggressive and defensive superiority over the Ana which they once possessed, just as in the inferior animals above the earth many peculiarities in their original formation, intended by nature for their protection, gradually fade or become inoperative when not needed under altered circumstances. I should be sorry, however, for any An who induced a Gy to make the experiment whether he or she were the stronger.

From the incident I have narrated, the Ana date certain alterations in the marriage customs, tending, perhaps, somewhat to the advantage of the male. They now bind themselves in wedlock only for three years; at the end of each third year either male or female can divorce the other and is free to marry again. At the end of ten years the An has the privilege of taking a second wife, allowing the first to retire if she so please. These regulations are for the most part a dead letter; divorces and polygamy are extremely rare, and the marriage state now seems singularly happy and serene among this astonishing people; the Gy-ei, notwithstanding their boastful superiority in physical strength and intellectual abilities, being much curbed into gentle manners by the dread of separation or of a second wife, and the Ana being very much the creatures of custom, and not, except under great aggravation, liking to exchange for hazardous novelties faces and manners to which they are reconciled by habit. But there is one privilege the Gy-ei carefully retain, and the desire for which perhaps forms the secret motive of most lady asserters of woman rights above ground. They claim the privilege, here

usurped by men, of proclaiming their love and urging their suit; in other words, of being the wooing party rather than the wooed. Such a phenomenon as an old maid does not exist among the Gy-ei. Indeed it is very seldom that a Gy does not secure any An upon whom she sets her heart, if his affections be not strongly engaged elsewhere. However coy, reluctant, and prudish, the male she courts may prove at first, yet her perseverance, her ardor, her persuasive powers, her command over the mystic agencies of vril, are pretty sure to run down his neck into what we call "the fatal noose."

Their argument for the reversal of that relationship of the sexes which the blind tyranny of man has established on the surface of the earth, appears cogent, and is advanced with a frankness which might well be commended to impartial consideration. They say, that of the two the female is by nature of a more loving disposition than the male—that love occupies a larger space in her thoughts, and is more essential to her happiness, and that therefore she ought to be the wooing party; that otherwise the male is a shy and dubitant creature—that he has often a selfish predilection for the single state—that he often pretends to misunderstand tender glances and delicate hints—that, in short, he must be resolutely pursued and captured. They add, moreover, that unless the Gy can secure the An of her choice, and one whom she would not select out of the whole world becomes her mate, she is not only less happy than she otherwise would be, but she is not so good a being, that her qualities of heart are not sufficiently developed; whereas the An is a creature that less lastingly concentrates his affections on one object; that if he cannot get the Gy whom he prefers he easily reconciles himself to another Gy; and, finally, that at the worst, if he is loved and taken care of it is less necessary to the welfare of his existence that he should love as well as be loved; he grows contented with his creature comforts, and the many occupations of thought which he creates for himself.

Whatever may be said as to this reasoning, the system works well for the male; for being thus sure that he is truly and ardently loved, and that the more coy and reluctant he shows himself, the more the determination to secure him increases, he generally contrives to make his consent dependent on such conditions as he thinks the best calculated to insure, if not a blissful, at least a peaceful life. Each individual An has his own hobbies, his own ways, his own predilections, and, whatever they may be, he demands a promise of full and unrestrained concession to them. This, in the pursuit of her object, the Gy readily promises; and as the characteristic of this extraordinary people is an implicit veneration for truth, and her word once given is never broken even by the giddiest Gy, the conditions stipulated for are religiously observed. In fact, notwithstanding all their abstract rights and powers, the Gy-ei are the most amiable, conciliatory, and submissive wives I have ever seen even in the happiest households above ground. It is an aphorism among them, that "where a Gy loves it is her pleasure to obey." It will be observed that in the relationship of the sexes I have spoken only of marriage, for such is the moral perfection to which this community has attained, that any illicit connection is as little possible amongst them as it would be to a couple of linnets during the time they agree to live in pairs.

CHAPTER XI.

Nothing had more perplexed me in seeking to reconcile my sense to the existence of regions extending below the surface of the earth, and habitable by beings, if dissimilar from, still, in all material points of organism, akin to those in the upper world, than the contradiction thus presented to the doctrine in which, I believe, most geologists and philosophers concur—viz., that though with us the sun is the great source of heat, yet the deeper we go beneath the crust of the earth, the greater is the increasing heat, being, it is said, found in the ratio of a degree for every foot, commencing from fifty feet below the surface. But though the domains of the tribe I speak of were, on the higher ground, so comparatively near to the surface, that I could account for a temperature, therein, suitable to organic life, yet even the ravines and valleys of that realm were much less hot than philosophers would deem possible at such a

depth—certainly not warmer than the south of France, or at least of Italy. And according to all the accounts I received, vast tracts immeasurably deeper beneath the surface, and in which one might have thought only salamanders could exist, were inhabited by innumerable races organized like ourselves.

I cannot pretend in any way to account for a fact which is so at variance with the recognized laws of science, nor could Zee much help me towards a solution of it. She did but conjecture that sufficient allowance had not been made by our philosophers for the extreme porousness of the interior earth—the vastness of its cavities and irregularities, which served to create free currents of air and frequent winds—and for the various modes in which heat is evaporated and thrown off. She allowed, however, that there was a depth at which the heat was deemed to be intolerable to such organized life as was known to the experience of the Vril-ya, though their philosophers believed that even in such places life of some kind, life sentient, life intellectual, would be found abundant and thriving, could the philosophers penetrate to it. "Wherever the All-Good builds," said she, "there, be sure, He places inhabitants. He loves not empty dwellings." She added, however, that many changes in temperature and climate had been effected by the skill of the Vril-ya, and that the agency of vril had been successfully employed in such changes. She described a subtle and life-giving medium called Lai, which I suspect to be identical with the ethereal oxygen of Dr. Lewins, wherein work all the correlative forces united under the name of vril; and contended that wherever this medium could be expanded, as it were, sufficiently for the various agencies of vril to have ample play, a temperature congenial to the highest forms of life could be secured. She said also, that it was the belief of their naturalists that flowers and vegetation had been produced originally (whether developed from seeds borne from the surface of the earth in the earlier convulsions of nature, or imported by the tribes that first sought refuge in cavernous hollows) through the operations of the light constantly brought to bear on them, and the gradual improvement in culture. She said also, that since the vril light had superseded all other light-giving bodies, the colors of flower and foliage had become more brilliant, and vegetation had acquired larger growth.

Leaving these matters to the consideration of those better competent to deal with them, I must now devote a few pages to the very interesting questions connected with the language of the Vril-ya.

CHAPTER XII.

THE language of the Vril-ya is peculiarly interesting, because it seems to me to exhibit with great clearness the traces of the three main transitions through which language passes in attaining to perfection of form.

One of the most illustrious of recent philologists, Max Müller, in arguing for the analogy between the strata of language and the strata of the earth, lays down this absolute dogma: "No language can, by any possibility, be inflectional without having passed through the agglutinative and isolating stratum. No language can be agglutinative without clinging with its roots to the underlying stratum of isolation."—*On the Stratification of Language*, p. 20.

Taking then the Chinese language as the best existing type of the original isolating stratum, "as the faithful photograph of man in his leading-strings trying the muscles of his mind, groping his way, and so delighted with his first successful grasps that he repeats them again and again," *—we have in the language of the Vril-ya, still "clinging with its roots to the underlying stratum," the evidences of the original isolation. It abounds in monosyllables, which are the foundations of the language. The transition into the agglutinative form marks an epoch that must have gradually extended through ages, the written literature of which has only survived in a few fragments of symbolical mythology and certain pithy sentences which have passed into popular proverbs. With the extant literature of the Vril-ya the inflectional stratum commences. No doubt at that time there must have operated concurrent causes, in the fusion of races by some dominant people, and the rise of some literary great phenomena by which the form of language became arrested and fixed. As the

* Max Müller, "Stratification of Language," p. 13.

inflectional stage prevailed over the agglutinative, it is surprising to see how much more boldly the original roots of the language project from the surface that conceals them. In the old fragments and proverbs of the preceding stage the monosyllables which compose those roots vanish amidst words of enormous length, comprehending whole sentences from which no one part can be disentangled from the other and employed separately. But when the inflectional form of language became so far advanced as to have its scholars and grammarians, they seem to have united in extirpating all such polysynthetical or polysyllabic monsters, as devouring invaders of the aboriginal forms. Words beyond three syllables became proscribed as barbarous, and in proportion as the language grew thus simplified it increased in strength, in dignity, and in sweetness. Though now very compressed in sound, it gains in clearness by that compression. By a single letter, according to its position, they contrive to express all that with civilized nations in our upper world it takes the waste, sometimes of syllables, sometimes of sentences, to express. Let me here cite one or two instances: An (which I will translate man), Ana (men); the letter *s* is with them a letter implying multitude, according to where it is placed; Sana means mankind; Ansa, a multitude of men. The prefix of certain letters in their alphabet invariably denotes compound significations. For instance, Gl (which with them is a single letter, as *th* is a single letter with the Greeks) at the commencement of a word infers an assemblage or union of things, sometimes kindred, sometimes dissimilar—as Oon, a house; Gloon, a town (*i.e.*, an assemblage of houses). Ata is sorrow; Glata, a public calamity. Aur-an is the health or wellbeing of a man; Glauran, the wellbeing of the state, the good of the community; and a word constantly in their mouths is A-glauran, which denotes their political creed — viz., that "the first principle of a community is the good of all." Aub is invention; Sila, a tone in music. Glaubsila, as uniting the ideas of invention and of musical intonation, is the classical word for poetry—abbreviated, in ordinary conversation, to Glaubs. Na, which with them is, like Gl, but a single letter, always, when an initial, implies something antagonistic to life or joy or comfort, resembling in this the Aryan root Nak, expressive of perishing or destruction. Nax is darkness; Narl, death; Naria, sin or evil. Nas—an uttermost condition of sin and evil—corruption. In writing, they deem it irreverent to express the Supreme Being by any special name. He is symbolized by what may be termed the hieroglyphic of a pyramid, A. In prayer they address him by a name which they deem too sacred to confide to a stranger, and I know it not. In conversation they generally use a periphrastic epithet, such as the All-Good. The letter V, symbolical of the inverted pyramid, where it is an initial, nearly always denotes excellence or power; as Vril, of which I have said so much; Veed, an immortal spirit; Veedya, immortality: Koom, pronounced like the Welsh Cwm, denotes something of hollowness. Koom itself is a profound hollow, metaphorically a cavern; Koom-in, a hole; Zi-koom, a valley; Koom-zi, vacancy or void; Bodh-koom, ignorance (literally, knowledge-void). Koom-Posh is their name for the government of the many, or the ascendancy of the most ignorant or hollow. Posh is an almost untranslatable idiom, implying, as the reader will see later, contempt. The closest rendering I can give to it is our slang term "bosh;" and thus Koom-Posh may be loosely rendered "Hollow-Bosh." But when Democracy or Koom-Posh degenerates from popular ignorance into that popular passion or ferocity which precedes its decease, as (to cite illustrations from the upper world) during the French Reign of Terror, or for the fifty years of the Roman Republic preceding the ascendancy of Augustus, their name for that state of things is Glek-Nas. Ek is strife—Glek, the universal strife. Nas, as I before said, is corruption or rot; thus Glek-Nas may be construed, "the universal strife-rot." Their compounds are very expressive; thus Bodh being knowledge, and Too, a participle that implies the action of cautiously approaching,—Too-bodh, is their word for Philosophy; Pah is a contemptuous exclamation analogous to our idiom, "stuff and nonsense;" Pah-bodh (literally, stuff-and-nonsense-knowledge) is their term for futile or false philosophy, and is applied to a species of metaphysical or speculative ratiocination formerly in vogue, which consisted in making inquiries that could not be answered, and were not worth making; such, for instance, as, "Why does an An have five

toes to his feet, instead of four or six? Did the first An, created by the All-Good, have the same number of toes as his descendants? In the form by which an An will be recognized by his friends in the future state of being, will he retain any toes at all, and, if so, will they be material toes or spiritual toes?" I take these illustrations of Pah-bodh, not in irony or jest, but because the very inquiries I name formed the subject of controversy by the latest cultivators of that "science"—4000 years ago.

In the declension of nouns I was informed that anciently there were eight cases (one more than in the Sanskrit Grammar); but the effect of time has been to reduce these cases, and multiply, instead of these varying terminations, explanatory prepositions. At present, in the Grammar submitted to my study, there were four cases to nouns, three having varying terminations, and the fourth a differing prefix.

SINGULAR.

Nom.	An,	Man.
Dat.	Ano,	to Man.
Ac.	Anam,	Man.
Voc.	Hil-An,	O Man.

PLURAL.

Nom.	Ana,	Men.
Dat.	Anoi,	to Men.
Ac.	Ananda,	Men.
Voc.	Hil-Ananda,	O Men.

In the elder inflectional literature the dual form existed—it has long been obsolete.

The genitive case with them is also obsolete: the dative supplies its place: they say the House *to* a Man, instead of the House *of* a Man. When used (sometimes in poetry), the genitive in the termination is the same as the nominative; so is the ablative, the preposition that marks it being a prefix or suffix at option, and generally decided by ear, according to the sound of the noun. It will be observed that the prefix Hil marks the vocative case. It is always retained in addressing another, except in the most intimate domestic relations; its omission would be considered rude: just as in our old forms of speech in addressing a king it would have been deemed disrespectful to say "King," and reverential to say "O King." In fact, as they have no titles of honor, the vocative adjuration supplies the place of a title, and is given impartially to all. The prefix Hil enters into the composition of words that imply distant communications, as Hil-ya, to travel.

In the conjugation of their verbs, which is much too lengthy a subject to enter on here, the auxiliary verb Ya, "to go," which plays so considerable a part in the Sanskrit, appears and performs a kindred office, as if it were a radical in some language from which both had descended. But another auxiliary of opposite signification also accompanies it and shares its labors—viz., Zi, to stay or repose. Thus Ya enters into the future tense, and Zi in the preterite of all verbs requiring auxiliaries. Yam, I go—Yiam, I may go—Yani-ya, I shall go (literally, I go to go) Zam-poo-yan, I have gone (literally, I rest from gone). Ya, as a termination, implies by analogy, progress, movement, efflorescence. Zi, as a terminal, denotes fixity, sometimes in a good sense, sometimes in a bad, according to the word with which it is coupled. Iva-zi, eternal goodness; Nan-zi, eternal evil. Poo (from) enters as a prefix to words that denote repugnance, or things from which we ought to be averse. Poo-pra, disgust; Poo-naria, falsehood, the vilest kind of evil. Poosh or Posh I have already confessed to be untranslatable literally. It is an expression of contempt not unmixed with pity. This radical seems to have originated from inherent sympathy between the labial effort and the sentiment that impelled it, Poo being an utterance in which the breath is exploded from the lips with more or less vehemence. On the other hand, Z, when an initial, is with them a sound in which the breath is sucked inward, and thus Zu, pronounced Zoo (which in their language is one letter), is the ordinary prefix to words that signify something that attracts, pleases, touches the heart—as Zummer, lover; Zutze, love; Zuzulia, delight. This indrawn sound of Z seems indeed naturally appropriate to fondness. Thus, even in our language, mothers say to their babies, in defiance of grammar, "Zoo darling;" and I have heard a learned professor at Boston call his wife (he had been only married a month) "Zoo little pet."

I cannot quit this subject, however, without observing by what slight changes in the dialects favored by different tribes of the same race, the original signification and beauty

of sounds may become confused and deformed. Zee told me with much indignation that Zummer (lover) which, in the way she uttered it, seemed slowly taken down to the very depths of her heart, was, in some not very distant communities of the Vril-ya, vitiated into the half-hissing, half-nasal, wholly disagreeable, sound of Subber. I thought to myself it only wanted the introduction of *n* before *u* to render it into an English word significant of the last quality an amorous Gy would desire in her Zummer.

I will but mention another peculiarity in this language which gives equal force and brevity to its forms of expressions.

A is with them, as with us, the first letter of the alphabet, and is often used as a prefix word by itself to convey a complex idea of sovereignty or chiefdom, or presiding principle. For instance, Iva is goodness; Diva goodness and happiness united; A-Diva is unerring and absolute truth. I have already noticed the value of A in A-glauran, so, in vril (to whose properties they trace their present state of civilization), A-vril, denotes, as I have said, civilization itself.

The philologist will have seen from the above how much the language of the Vril-ya is akin to the Aryan or Indo-Germanic; but, like all languages, it contains words and forms in which transfers from very opposite sources of speech have been taken. The very title of Tur, which they give to their supreme magistrate, indicates theft from a tongue akin to the Turanian. They say themselves that this is a foreign word borrowed from a title which their historical records show to have been borne by the chief of a nation with whom the ancestors of the Vril-ya were, in very remote periods, on friendly terms, but which has long become extinct, and they say that when, after the discovery of vril, they remodelled their political institutions, they expressly adopted a title taken from an extinct race and a dead language for that of their chief magistrate, in order to avoid all titles for that office with which they had previous associations.

Should life be spared to me, I may collect into systematic form such knowledge as I acquired of this language during my sojourn amongst the Vril-ya. But what I have already said will perhaps suffice to show to genuine philological students that a language which, preserving so many of the roots in the aboriginal form, and clearing from the immediate, but transitory, polysynthetical stage so many rude incumbrances, has attained to such a union of simplicity and compass in its final inflectional forms, must have been the gradual work of countless ages and many varieties of mind; that it contains the evidence of fusion between congenial races, and necessitated, in arriving at the shape of which I have given examples, the continuous culture of a highly thoughtful people.

That, nevertheless, the literature which belongs to this language is a literature of the past; that the present felicitous state of society at which the Ana have attained forbids the progressive cultivation of literature, especially in the two main divisions of fiction and history,—I shall have occasion to show later.

CHAPTER XIII.

THIS people have a religion, and, whatever may be said against it, at least it has these strange peculiarities: firstly, that they all believe in the creed they profess; secondly, that they all practise the precepts which the creed inculcates. They unite in the worship of the one divine Creator and Sustainer of the universe. They believe that it is one of the properties of the all-permeating agency of vril, to transmit to the well-spring of life and intelligence every thought that a living creature can conceive; and though they do not contend that the idea of a Deity is innate, yet they say that the An (man) is the only creature, so far as their observation of nature extends, to whom *the capacity of conceiving that idea*, with all the trains of thought which open out from it, is vouchsafed. They hold that this capacity is a privilege that cannot have been given in vain, and hence that prayer and thanksgiving are acceptable to the divine Creator, and necessary to the complete development of the human creature. They offer their devotions both in private and public. Not being considered one of their species, I was not admitted into the building or temple in which the public worship is rendered; but I am informed that the service is exceedingly short, and unattended with any pomp of ceremony. It is a doctrine with the Vril-ya, that earnest devotion or complete ab-

straction from the actual world cannot, with benefit to itself, be maintained long at a stretch by the human mind, especially in public, and that all attempts to do so either lead to fanaticism or to hypocrisy. When they pray in private, it is when they are alone or with their young children.

They say that in ancient times there was a great number of books written upon speculations as to the nature of the Deity, and upon the forms of belief or worship supposed to be most agreeable to Him. But these were found to lead to such heated and angry disputations as not only to shake the peace of the community and divide families before the most united, but in the course of discussing the attributes of the Deity, the existence of the Deity Himself became argued away, or, what was worse, became invested with the passions and infirmities of the human disputants. "For," said my host, "since a finite being like an An can not possibly define the Infinite, so, when he endeavors to realize an idea of the Divinity, he only reduces the Divinity into an An like himself." During the later ages, therefore, all theological speculations, though not forbidden, have been so discouraged as to have fallen utterly into disuse.

The Vril-ya unite in a conviction of a future state, more felicitous and more perfect than the present. If they have very vague notions of the doctrine of rewards and punishments, it is perhaps because they have no systems of rewards and punishments among themselves, for there are no crimes to punish, and their moral standard is so even that no An among them is, upon the whole, considered more virtuous than another. If one excels, perhaps, in one virtue, another equally excels in some other virtue; if one has his prevalent fault or infirmity, so also another has his. In fact, in their extraordinary mode of life, there are so few temptations to wrong, that they are good (according to their notions of goodness) merely because they live. They have some fanciful notions upon the continuance of life, when once bestowed, even in the vegetable world, as the reader will see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THOUGH, as I have said, the Vril-ya discourage all speculations on the nature of the Supreme Being, they appear to concur in a belief by which they think to solve that great problem of the existence of evil which has so perplexed the philosophy of the upper world. They hold that wherever He has once given life, with the perceptions of that life, however faint it be, as in a plant, the life is never destroyed; it passes into new and improved forms, though not in this planet (differing therein from the ordinary doctrine of metempsychosis), and that the living thing retains the sense of identity, so that it connects its past life with its future, and is *conscious* of its progressive improvement in the scale of joy. For they say that, without this assumption, they cannot, according to the lights of human reason vouchsafed to them, discover the perfect justice which must be a constituent quality of the All-Wise and the All-Good. Injustice, they say, can only emanate from three causes: want of wisdom to perceive what is just, want of benevolence to desire, want of power to fulfil it; and that each of these three wants is incompatible in the All-Wise, the All-Good, the All-Powerful. But that, while even in this life, the wisdom, the benevolence, and the power of the Supreme Being are sufficiently apparent to compel our recognition, the justice necessarily resulting from those attributes, absolutely requires another life, not for man only, but for every living thing of the inferior orders. That, alike in the animal and the vegetable world, we see one individual rendered, by circumstances beyond its control, exceedingly wretched compared to its neighbors—one only exists as the prey of another—even a plant suffers from disease till it perishes prematurely, while the plant next to it rejoices in its vitality and lives out its happy life free from a pang. That it is an erroneous analogy from human infirmities to reply by saying that the Supreme Being only acts by general laws, thereby making his own secondary causes so potent as to mar the essential kindness of the First Cause; and a still meaner and more ignorant conception of the All-Good, to dismiss with a brief contempt all consideration of justice for the myriad forms into which He has infused life, and assume that justice is only due to the single product of the An. There is no small and no great in the eyes of the divine Life-Giver. But once grant that nothing, however humble,

which feels that it lives and suffers, can perish through the series of ages, that all its suffering here, if continuous from the moment of its birth to that of its transfer to another form of being, would be more brief compared with eternity than the cry of the new-born is compared to the whole life of a man; and once suppose that this living thing retains its sense of identity when so transferred (for without that sense it could be aware of no future being), and though, indeed, the fulfilment of divine justice is removed from the scope of our ken, yet we have a right to assume it to be uniform and universal, and not varying and partial, as it would be if acting only upon general secondary laws; because such perfect justice flows of necessity from perfectness of knowledge to conceive, perfectness of love to will, and perfectness of power to complete it.

However fantastic this belief of the Vril-ya may be, it tends perhaps to confirm politically the systems of government which, admitting differing degrees of wealth, yet establishes perfect equality in rank, exquisite mildness in all relations and intercourse, and tenderness to all created things which the good of the community does not require them to destroy. And though their notion of compensation to a tortured insect or a cankered flower may seem to some of us a very wild crotchet, yet, at least, it is not a mischievous one; and it may furnish matter for no unpleasing reflection to think that within the abysses of earth, never lit by a ray from the material heavens, there should have penetrated so luminous a conviction of the ineffable goodness of the Creator—so fixed an idea that the general laws by which He acts cannot admit of any partial injustice or evil, and therefore cannot be comprehended without reference to their action over all space and throughout all time. And since, as I shall have occasion to observe later, the intellectual conditions and social systems of this subterranean race comprise and harmonize great, and apparently antagonistic, varieties in philosophical doctrine and speculation which have from time to time been started, discussed, dismissed, and have re-appeared amongst thinkers or dreamers in the upper world,—so I may perhaps appropriately conclude this reference to the belief of the Vril-ya, that self-conscious or sentient life once given is indestructible among inferior creatures as well as in man, by an eloquent passage from the work of that eminent zoologist, Louis Agassiz, which I have only just met with, many years after I had committed to paper those recollections of the life of the Vril-ya, which I now reduce into something like arrangement and form:—

"The relations which individual animals bear to one another are of such a character that they ought long ago to have been considered as sufficient proof that no organized being could ever have been called into existence by other agency than by the direct intervention of a reflective mind. This argues strongly in favor of the existence in every animal of an immaterial principle similiar to that which by its excellence and superior endowments places man so much above animals; yet the principle unquestionably exists, and whether it be called sense, reason, or instinct, it presents in the whole range of organized beings a series of phenomena closely linked together, and upon it are based not only the higher manifestations of the mind, but the very permanence of the specific differences which characterize every organism. Most of the arguments in favor of the immortality of man apply equally to the permanency of this principle in other living beings. May I not add that a future life in which man would be deprived of that great source of enjoyment and intellectual and moral improvement which results from the contemplation of the harmonies of an organic world would involve a lamentable loss? And may we not look to a spiritual concert of the combined worlds and *all* their inhabitants in the presence of their Creator as the highest conception of paradise?"—*Essay on Classification*, sect. xvii., pp. 97–99.

CHAPTER XV.

KIND to me as I found all in this household, the young daughter of my host was the most considerate and thoughtful in her kindness. At her suggestion I laid aside the habiliments in which I had descended from the upper earth, and adopted the dress of the Vril-ya, with the exception of the artful wings which served them, when on foot, as a graceful mantle. But as many of the Vril-ya, when occupied in urban pursuits, did not wear these

wings, this exception created no marked difference between myself and the race among which I sojourned, and I was thus enabled to visit the town without exciting unpleasant curiosity. Out of the household no one suspected that I had come from the upper world, and I was but regarded as one of some inferior and barbarous tribe whom Aph-Lin entertained as a guest.

The city was large in proportion to the territory round it, which was of no greater extent than many an English or Hungarian nobleman's estate; but the whole of it, to the verge of the rocks which constituted its boundary, was cultivated to the nicest degree, except where certain allotments of mountain and pasture were humanely left free to the sustenance of the harmless animals they had tamed, though not for domestic use. So great is their kindness towards these humbler creatures, that a sum is devoted from the public treasury for the purpose of deporting them to other Vril-ya communities willing to receive them (chiefly new colonies), whenever they become too numerous for the pastures alloted to them in their native place. They do not, however, multiply to an extent comparable to the ratio at which, with us, animals bred for slaughter increase. It seems a law of nature that animals not useful to man gradually recede from the domains he occupies, or even become extinct. It is an old custom of the various sovereign states amidst which the race of the Vril-ya are distributed, to leave between each state a neutral and uncultivated border-land. In the instance of the community I speak of, this tract, being a ridge of savage rocks, was impassable by foot, but was easily surmounted, whether by the wings of the inhabitants or the air-boats, of which I shall speak hereafter. Roads through it were also cut for the transit of vehicles impelled by vril. These intercommunicating tracts were always kept lighted, and the expense thereof defrayed by a special tax, to which all the communities comprehended in the denomination of Vril-ya contribute in settled proportions. By these means a considerable commercial traffic with other states, both near and distant, was carried on.

The surplus wealth of this special community was chiefly agricultural. The community was also eminent for skill in constructing implements connected with the arts of husbandry. In exchange for such merchandise it obtained articles more of luxury than necessity. There were few things imported on which they set a higher price than birds taught to pipe artful tunes in concert. These were brought from a great distance, and were marvellous for beauty of song and plumage. I understood that extraordinary care was taken by their breeders and teachers in selection, and that the species had wonderfully improved during the last few years. I saw no other pet animals among this community except some very amusing and sportive creatures of the Batrachian species, resembling frogs, but with very intelligent countenances, which the children were fond of and kept in their private gardens. They appear to have no animals akin to our dogs or horses, though that learned naturalist, Zee, informed me that such creatures had once existed in those parts, and might now be found in regions inhabited by other races than the Vril-ya. She said that they had gradually disappeared from the more civilized world since the discovery of vril, and the results attending that discovery had dispensed with their uses. Machinery and the invention of wings had superseded the horse as a beast of burden; and the dog was no longer wanted either for protection or the chase, as it had been when the ancestors of the Vril-ya feared the aggressions of their own kind, or hunted the lesser animals for food. Indeed, however, so far as the horse was concerned, this region was so rocky that a horse could have been, there, of little use either for pastime or burden. The only creature they use for the latter purpose is a kind of large goat, which is much employed on farms.

The nature of the surrounding soil in these districts may be said to have first suggested the invention of wings and air-boats. The largeness of space, in proportion to the rural territory occupied by the city, was occasioned by the custom of surrounding every house with a separate garden. The broad main streeet in which Aph-Lin dwelt, expanded into a vast square, in which were placed the College of Sages and all the public offices; a magnificent fountain of the luminous fluid which I call naptha (I am ignorant of its real nature) in the centre. All these public edifices have a uniform character of massiveness and solidity. They reminded me of the architectural pictures of Martin. Along the upper storeys of each ran a balcony, or rather a terraced garden, sup-

ported by columns, filled with flowering-plants, and tenanted by many kinds of tame birds. From the square branched several streets, all broad and brilliantly lighted, and ascending up the eminence on either side. In my excursions in the town I was never allowed to go alone; Aph-Lin or his daughter was my habitual companion. In this community the adult Gy is seen walking with any young An as familiarly as if there were no difference of sex.

The retail shops are not very numerous; the persons who attend on a customer are all children of various ages, and exceedingly intelligent and courteous, but without the least touch of importunity or cringing. The shop-keeper himself might or might not be visible; when visible, he seemed rarely employed on any matter connected with his professional business; and yet he had taken to that business from special liking to it, and quite independently of his general sources of fortune.

Some of the richest citizens in the community kept such shops. As I have before said, no difference of rank is recognizable, and therefore all occupations hold the same equal social status. An An, of whom I bought my sandals, was the brother of the Tur, or chief magistrate; and though his shop was not larger than that of any bootmaker in Bond Street or Broadway, he was said to be twice as rich as the Tur who dwelt in a palace. No doubt, however, he had some country-seat.

The Ana of the community are, on the whole, an indolent set of beings after the active age of childhood. Whether by temperament or philosophy, they rank repose among the chief blessings of life. Indeed, when you take away from a human being the incentives to action which are found in cupidity or ambition, it seems to me no wonder that he rests quiet.

In their ordinary movements they prefer the use of their feet to that of their wings. But for their sports or (to indulge in a bold misuse of terms) their public *promenades*, they employ the latter, also for the aerial dances I have described, as well as for visiting their country places, which are mostly placed on lofty heights; and, when still young, they prefer their wings, for travel into the other regions of the Ana, to vehicular conveyances.

Those who accustom themselves to flight can fly, if less rapidly than some birds, yet from twenty-five to thirty miles an hour, and keep up that rate for five or six hours at a stretch. But the Ana generally, on reaching middle age, are not fond of rapid movements requiring violent exercise. Perhaps for this reason, as they hold a doctrine which our own physicians will doubtless approve—viz., that regular transpiration through the pores of the skin is essential to health, they habitually use the sweating-baths to which we give the name of Turkish or Roman, succeeded by douches of perfumed waters. They have great faith in the salubrious virtue of certain perfumes.

It is their custom also, at stated but rare periods, perhaps four times a year when in health, to use a bath charged with vril.* They consider that this fluid, sparingly used, is a great sustainer of life; but used in excess, when in the normal state of health, rather tends to reaction and exhausted vitality. For nearly all their diseases, however, they resort to it as the chief assistant to nature in throwing off the complaint.

In their own way they are the most luxurious of people, but all their luxuries are innocent. They may be said to dwell in an atmosphere of music and fragrance. Every room has its mechanical contrivances for melodious sounds, usually tuned down to soft-murmured notes, which seem like sweet whispers from invisible spirits. They are too accustomed to these gentle sounds to find them a hindrance to conversation, nor, when alone, to reflection. But they have a notion that to breathe an air filled with continuous melody and perfume has necessarily an effect at once soothing and elevating upon the formation of character and the habits of thought. Though so temperate, and with total abstinence from other animal food than milk, and from all intoxicating drinks, they are delicate and dainty to an extreme in food and beverage; and in all their sports even the old exhibit a childlike gaiety. Happiness is the end at which they aim, not as the excitement of a moment, but as the prevailing condition of the entire existence; and regard for the happiness of each other is evinced by the exquisite amenity of their manners.

Their conformation of skull has marked dif-

* I once tried the effect of the vril bath. It was very similar in its invigorating powers to that of the baths at Gastein, the virtues of which are ascribed by many physicians to electricity; but though similar, the effect of the vril bath was more lasting.

ferences from that of any known races in the upper world, though I cannot help thinking it a development, in the course of countless ages, of the Brachycephalic type of the Age of Stone in Lyell's "Elements of Geology," C. X., p. 113, as compared with the Dolichocephalic type of the beginning of the Age of Iron, correspondent with that now so prevalent amongst us, and called the Celtic type. It has the same comparative massiveness of forehead, not receding like the Celtic—the same even roundness in the frontal organs; but it is far loftier in the apex, and far less pronounced in the hinder cranial hemisphere where phrenologists place the animal organs. To speak as a phrenologist, the cranium common to the Vril-ya has the organs of weight, number, tune, form, order, casuality, very largely developed; that of construction much more pronounced than that of ideality. Those which are called the moral organs, such as conscientiousness and benevolence, are amazingly full; amativeness and combativeness are both small; adhesiveness large; the organ of destructiveness (*i. e.*, of determined clearance of intervening obstacles) immense, but less than that of benevolence; and their philoprogenitiveness takes rather the character of compassion and tenderness to things that need aid or protection than of the animal love of offspring. I never met with one person deformed or misshapen. The beauty of their countenances is not only in symmetry of feature, but in a smoothness of surface, which continues without line or wrinkle to the extreme of old age, and a serene sweetness of expression, combined with that majesty which seems to come from consciousness of power, and the freedom of all terror, physical or moral. It is that very sweetness, combined with that majesty, which inspired in a beholder like myself, accustomed to strive with the passions of mankind, a sentiment of humiliation, of awe, of dread. It is such an expression as a painter might give to a demigod, a genius, an angel. The males of the Vril-ya are entirely beardless; the Gy-ei sometimes, in old age, develop a small moustache.

I was surprised to find that the color of their skin was not uniformly that which I had remarked in those individuals whom I had first encountered,—some being much fairer, and even with blue eyes, and hair of a deep golden auburn, though still of complexions warmer or richer in tone than persons in the north of Europe.

I was told that this admixture of coloring arose from intermarriage with other and more distant tribes of the Vril-ya, who, whether by the accident of climate or early distinction of race, were of fairer hues than the tribes of which this community formed one. It was considered that the dark-red skin showed the most ancient family of Ana; but they attached no sentiment of pride to that antiquity, and, on the contrary, believed their present excellence of breed came from frequent crossing with other families differing, yet akin; and they encourage such intermarriages, always provided that it be with the Vril-ya nations. Nations which, not conforming their manners and institutions to those of the Vril-ya, nor indeed held capable of acquiring the powers over the vril agencies which it had taken them generations to attain and transmit, were regarded with more disdain than citizens of New York regard the negroes.

I learned from Zee, who had more lore in all matters than any male with whom I was brought into familiar converse, that the superiority of the Vril-ya was supposed to have originated in the intensity of their earlier struggles against obstacles in nature amidst the localities in which they had first settled. "Wherever," said Zee, moralizing, "wherever goes on that early process in the history of civilization, by which life is made a struggle, in which the individual has to put forth all his powers to compete with his fellow, we invariably find this result—viz., since in the competition a vast number must perish, nature selects for preservation only the strongest specimens. With our race, therefore, even before the discovery of vril, only the highest organizations were preserved; and there is among our ancient books a legend, once popularly believed, that we were driven from a region that seems to denote the world you come from, in order to perfect our condition and attain to the purest elimination of our species by the severity of the struggles our forefathers underwent; and that, when our education shall become finally completed, we are destined to return to the upper world, and supplant all the inferior races now existing therein."

Aph-Lin and Zee often conversed with me in private upon the political and social conditions of that upper world, in which Zee so

philosophically assumed that the inhabitants were to be exterminated one day or other by the advent of the Vril-ya. They found in my accounts,—in which I continued to do all I could (without launching into falsehoods so positive that they would have been easily detected by the shrewdness of my listeners) to present our powers and ourselves in the most flattering point of view, perpetual subjects of comparison between our more civilized populations and the meaner subterranean races which they considered hopelessly plunged in barbarism, and doomed to gradual if certain extinction. But they both agreed in desiring to conceal from their community all premature opening into the regions lighted by the sun; both were humane, and shrunk from the thought of annihilating so many millions of creatures; and the pictures I drew of our life, highly colored as they were, saddened them. In vain I boasted of our great men—poets, philosophers, orators, generals—and defied the Vril-ya to produce their equals.

"Alas!" said Zee, her grand face softening into an angel-like compassion, "this predominance of the few over the many is the surest and most fatal sign of a race incorrigibly savage. See you not that the primary condition of mortal happiness consists in the extinction of that strife and competition between individuals, which, no matter what forms of government they adopt, render the many subordinate to the few, destroy real liberty to the individual, whatever may be the nominal liberty of the state, and annul that calm of existence, without which, felicity, mental or bodily, cannot be attained? Our notion is, that the more we can assimilate life to the existence which our noblest ideas can conceive to be that of spirits on the other side of the grave, why, the more we approximate to a divine happiness here, and the more easily we glide into the conditions of being hereafter. For, surely, all we can imagine of the life of gods, or of blessed immortals, supposes the absence of self-made cares and contentious passions, such as avarice and ambition. It seems to us that it must be a life of serene tranquillity, not indeed without active occupations to the intellectual or spiritual powers, but occupations, of whatsoever nature they be, congenial to the idiosyncrasies of each, not forced and repugnant—a life gladdened by the untrammelled interchange of gentle affections, in which the moral atmosphere utterly kills hate and vengeance, and strife and rivalry. Such is the political state to which all the tribes and families of the Vril-ya seek to attain, and towards that goal all our theories of government are shaped. You see how utterly opposed is such a progress to that of the uncivilized nations from which you come, and which aim at a systematic perpetuity of troubles, and cares, and warring passions, aggravated more and more as their progress storms its way onward. The most powerful of all the races in our world, beyond the pale of the Vril-ya, esteems itself the best governed of all political societies, and to have reached in that respect the extreme end at which political wisdom can arrive, so that the other nations should tend more or less to copy it. It has established, on its broadest base, the Koom-Posh—viz., the government of the ignorant upon the principle of being the most numerous. It has placed the supreme bliss in the vying with each other in all things, so that the veil passions are never in repose—vying for power, for wealth, for eminence of some kind; and in this rivalry it is horrible to hear the vituperation, the slanders, and calumnies which even the best and mildest among them heap on each other without remorse or shame."

"Some years ago," said Aph-Lin, "I visited this people, and their misery and degradation were the more appalling because they were always boasting of their felicity and grandeur as compared with the rest of their species. And there is no hope that this people, which evidently resembles your own, can improve, because all their notions tend to further deterioration. They desire to enlarge their dominion more and more, in direct antagonism to the truth that, beyond a very limited range, it is impossible to secure to a community the happiness which belongs to a well-ordered family; and the more they mature a system by which a few individuals are heated and swollen to a size above the standard slenderness of the millions, the more they chuckle and exact, and cry out, 'See by what great exceptions to the common littleness of our race we prove the magnificent results of our system!'"

"In fact," resumed Zee, "if the wisdom of human life be to approximate to the serene equality of immortals, there can be no more

direct flying off into the opposite direction than a system which aims at carrying to the utmost the inequalities and turbulences of mortals. Nor do I see how, by any forms of religious belief, mortals, so acting, could fit themselves even to appreciate the joys of immortals to which they still expect to be transferred by the mere act of dying. On the contrary, minds accustomed to place happiness in things so much the reverse of god-like, would find the happiness of gods exceedingly dull, and would long to get back to a world in which they could quarrel with each other."

CHAPTER XVI.

I HAVE spoken so much of the Vril Staff that my reader may expect me to describe it. This I cannot do accurately, for I was never allowed to handle it for fear of some terrible accident occasioned by my ignorance of its use. It is hollow, and has in the handle several stops, keys, or springs by which its force can be altered, modified, or directed—so that by one process it destroys, by another it heals—by one it can rend the rock, by another disperse the vapor—by one it affects bodies, by another it can exercise a certain influence over minds. It is usually carried in the convenient size of a walking-staff, but it has slides by which it can be lengthened or shortened at will. When used for special purposes, the upper part rests in the hollow of the palm, with the fore and middle fingers protruded. I was assured, however, that its power was not equal in all, but proportioned to the amount of certain vril properties in the wearer, in affinity, or *rapport*, with the purposes to be effected. Some were more potent to destroy, others to heal, etc.; much also depended on the calm and steadiness of volition in the manipulator.

They assert that the full exercise of vril power can only be acquired by constitutional temperament—*i.e.*, by hereditarily transmitted organization—and that a female infant of four years old belonging to the Vril-ya races can accomplish feats with the wand placed for the first time in her hand, which a life spent in its practice would not enable the strongest and most skilled mechanician, born out of the pale of the Vril-ya, to achieve. All these wands are not equally complicated; those entrusted to children are much simpler than those borne by sages of either sex, and constructed with a view to the special object in which the children are employed; which, as I have before said, is among the youngest children the most destructive. In the wands of wives and mothers the correlative destroying force is usually abstracted, the healing power fully charged. I wish I could say more in detail of this singular conductor of the vril fluid, but its machinery is as exquisite as its effects are marvellous.

I should say, however, that this people have invented certain tubes by which the vril fluid can be conducted towards the object it is meant to destroy, throughout a distance almost indefinite; at least I put it modestly when I say from 500 to 600 miles. And their mathematical science as applied to such purpose is so nicely accurate, that on the report of some observer in an air-boat, any member of the vril department can estimate unerringly the nature of intervening obstacles, the height to which the projectile instrument should be raised, and the extent to which it should be charged, so as to reduce to ashes within a space of time too short for me to venture to specify it, a capital twice as vast as London.

Certainly these Ana are wonderful mechanicians—wonderful for the adaptation of the inventive faculty to practical uses.

I went with my host and his daughter Zee over the great public museum, which occupies a wing in the College of Sages, and in which are hoarded, as curious specimens of the ignorant and blundering experiments of ancient times, many contrivances on which we pride ourselves as recent achievements. In one department, carelessly thrown aside as obsolete lumber, are tubes for destroying life by metallic balls and an inflammable powder, on the principle of our cannons and catapults, and even still more murderous than our latest improvements.

My host spoke of these with a smile of contempt, such as an artillery officer might bestow on the bows and arrows of the Chinese. In another department there were models of vehicles and vessels worked by steam, and of a balloon which might have been constructed by Montgolfier. "Such," said Zee, with an air of meditative wisdom—"such were the feeble triflings with nature of our savage fore-

fathers, ere they had even a glimmering perception of the properties of vril!"

This young Gy was a magnificent specimen of the muscular force to which the females of her country attain. Her features were beautiful, like those of all her race: never in the upper world have I seen a face so grand and so faultless, but her devotion to the severer studies had given to her countenance an expression of abstract thought which rendered it somewhat stern when in repose; and such sternness became formidable when observed in connection with her ample shoulders and lofty stature. She was tall even for a Gy, and I saw her lift up a cannon as easily as I could lift a pocket-pistol. Zee inspired me with a profound terror—a terror which increased when we came into a department of the museum appropriated to models of contrivances worked by the agency of vril; for here, merely by a certain play of her vril staff, she herself standing at a distance, she put into movement large and weighty substances. She seemed to endow them with intelligence, and to make them comprehend and obey her command. She set complicated pieces of machinery into movement, arrested the movement or continued it, until, within an incredibly short time, various kinds of raw material were reproduced as symmetrical works of art, complete and perfect. Whatever effect mesmerism or electro-biology produces over the nerves and muscles of animated objects, this young Gy produced by the motions of her slender rod over the springs and wheels of lifeless mechanism.

When I mentioned to my companions my astonishment at this influence over inanimate matter—while owning that, in our world, I had witnessed phenomena which showed that over certain living organizations certain other living organizations could establish an influence genuine in itself, but often exaggerated by credulity or craft, Zee—who was more interested in such subjects than her father, bade me stretch forth my hand, and then, placing her own beside it, she called my attention to certain distinctions of type and character. In the first place, the thumb of the Gy (and, as I afterwards noticed, of all that race, male or female) was much larger, at once longer and more massive, than is found with our species above ground. There is almost, in this, as great a difference as there is between the thumb of a man and that of a gorilla. Secondly, the palm is proportionately thicker than ours—the texture of the skin infinitely finer and softer—its average warmth is greater. More remarkable than all this, is a visible nerve, perceptible under the skin, which starts from the wrist, skirting the ball of the thumb, and branching, fork-like, at the roots of the fore and middle fingers. "With your slight formation of thumb," said the philosophical young Gy, "and with the absence of the nerve which you find more or less developed in the hands of our race, you can never achieve other than imperfect and feeble power over the agency of vril; but so far as the nerve is concerned, that is not found in the hands of our earliest progenitors, nor in those of the ruder tribes without the pale of the Vril-ya. It has been slowly developed in the course of generations, commencing in the early achievements, and increasing with the continuous exercise, of the vril power; therefore, in the course of one or two thousand years, such a nerve may possibly be engendered in those higher beings of your race who devote themselves to that paramount science through which is attained command over all the subtler forces of nature permeated by vril. But when you talk of matter as something in itself inert and motionless, your parents or tutors surely cannot have left you so ignorant as not to know that no form of matter is motionless and inert: every particle is constantly in motion and constantly acted upon by agencies, of which heat is the most apparent and rapid, but vril the most subtle, and, when skilfully wielded, the most powerful.

"So that, in fact, the current launched by my hand and guided by my will does but render quicker and more potent the action which is eternally at work upon every particle of matter, however inert and stubborn it may seem. If a heap of metal be not capable of originating a thought of its own, yet, through its internal susceptibility to movement, it obtains the power to receive the thought of the intellectual agent at work on it: and which, when conveyed with a sufficient force of the vril power, it is as much compelled to obey as if it were displaced by a visible bodily force. It is animated for the time being by the soul thus infused into it, so that one may almost say that it lives and it reasons. Without this we could not make our automata supply the place of servants."

I was too much in awe of the thews and the learning of the young Gy to hazard the risk of arguing with her. I had read somewhere in my school-boy days that a wise man, disputing with a Roman emperor, suddenly drew in his horns; and when the emperor asked him whether he had nothing further to say on his side of the question, replied, "Nay, Cæsar, there is no arguing against a reasoner who commands twenty-five legions."

Though I had a secret persuasion that, whatever the real effects of vril upon matter, Mr. Faraday could have proved her a very shallow philosopher as to its extent or its causes, I had no doubt that Zee could have brained all the Fellows of the Royal Society, one after the other, with a blow of her fist. Every sensible man knows that it is useless to argue with any ordinary female upon matters he comprehends; but to argue with a Gy seven feet high upon the mysteries of vril,—as well argue in a desert, and with a simoom!

Amid the various departments to which the vast building of the College of Sages was appropriated, that which interested me most was devoted to the archæology of the Vril-ya, and comprised a very ancient collection of portraits. In these the pigments and groundwork employed were of so durable a nature that even pictures said to be executed at dates as remote as those in the earliest annals of the Chinese, retained much freshness of color. In examining this collection, two things especially struck me:—firstly, That the pictures said to be between 6,000 and 7,000 years' old were of a much higher degree of art than any produced within the last 3,000 or 4,000 years; and secondly, That the portraits within the former period much more resembled our own upper world and European types of countenance. Some of them, indeed, reminded me of the Italian heads which look out from the canvas of Titian—speaking of ambition or craft, of care or of grief, with furrows in which the passions have passed with iron ploughshare. These were the countenances of men who had lived in struggle and conflict before the discovery of the latent forces of vril had changed the character of society—men who had fought with each other for power or fame as we in the upper world fight.

The type of face began to evince a marked change about a thousand years after the vril revolution, becoming then, with each generation, more serene, and in that serenity more terribly distinct from the faces of laboring and sinful men; while in proportion as the beauty and the grandeur of the countenance itself became more fully developed, the art of the painter became more tame and monotonous.

But the greatest curiosity in the collection was that of three portraits belonging to the pre-historical age, and, according to mythical tradition, taken by the orders of a philosopher, whose origin and attributes were as much mixed up with symbolical fable as those of an Indian Budh or a Greek Prometheus.

From this mysterious personage, at once a sage and a hero, all the principal sections of the Vril-ya race pretend to trace a common origin.

The portraits are of the philosopher himself, of his grandfather, and great-grandfather. They are all at full length. The philosopher is attired in a long tunic which seems to form a loose suit of scaly armor, borrowed, perhaps, from some fish or reptile, but the feet and hands are exposed: the digits in both are wonderfully long, and webbed. He has little or no perceptible throat, and a low receding forehead, not at all the ideal of a sage's. He has bright brown prominent eyes, a very wide mouth and high cheek-bones, and a muddy complexion. According to tradition, this philosopher had lived to a patriarchal age, extending over many centuries, and he remembered distinctly in middle life his grandfather as surviving, and in childhood his great-grandfather; the portrait of the first he had taken, or caused to be taken, while yet alive—that of the latter was taken from his effigies in mummy. The portrait of the grandfather had the features and aspect of the philosopher, only much more exaggerated: he was not dressed, and the color of his body was singular; the breast and stomach yellow, the shoulders and legs of a dull bronze hue: the great-grandfather was a magnificent specimen of the Batrachian genus, a Giant Frog, *pur et simple.*

Among the pithy sayings which, according to tradition, the philosopher bequeathed to posterity in rhythmical form and sententious brevity, this is notably recorded: "Humble yourselves, my descendants; the father of your race was a *twat* (tadpole): exalt yourselves, my descendants, for it was the same Divine

Thought which created your father that developes itself in exalting you."

Aph-Lin told me this fable while I gazed on the three Batrachian portraits. I said in reply: "You make a jest of my supposed ignorance and credulity as an uneducated Tish, but though these horrible daubs may be of great antiquity, and were intended, perhaps, for some rude caricature, I presume that none of your race, even in the less enlightened ages, ever believed that the great-grandson of a Frog became a sententious philosopher; or that any section, I will not say of the lofty Vril-ya, but of the meanest varieties of the human race, had its origin in a Tadpole."

"Pardon me," answered Aph-Lin: "in what we call the Wrangling or Philosophical Period of History, which was at its height about seven thousand years ago, there was a very distinguished naturalist, who proved to the satisfaction of numerous disciples such analogical and anatomical agreements in structure between an An and a Frog, as to show that out of the one must have developed the other. They had some diseases in common; they were both subject to the same parasitical worms in the intestines; and, strange to say, the An has, in his structure, a swimming-bladder, no longer of any use to him, but which is a rudiment that clearly proves his descent from a Frog. Nor is there any argument against this theory to be found in the relative difference of size, for there are still existent in our world Frogs of a size and stature not inferior to our own, and many thousand years ago they appear to have been still larger."

"I understand that," said I, "because Frogs thus enormous are, according to our eminent geologists, who perhaps saw them in dreams, said to have been distinguished inhabitants of the upper world before the Deluge; and such Frogs are exactly the creatures likely to have flourished in the lakes and morasses of your subterranean regions. But pray, proceed."

"In the Wrangling Period of History, whatever one sage asserted another sage was sure to contradict. In fact, it was a maxim in that age, that the human reason could only be sustained aloft by being tossed to and fro in the perpetual motion of contradiction; and therefore another sect of philosophers maintained the doctrine that the An was not the descendant of the Frog, but that the Frog was clearly the improved development of the An. The shape of the Frog, taken generally, was much more symmetrical than that of the An; beside the beautiful conformation of its lower limbs, its flanks and shoulders, the majority of the Ana in that day were almost deformed, and certainly ill-shaped. Again, the Frog had the power to live alike on land and in water—a mighty privilege, partaking of a spiritual essence denied to the An, since the disuse of his swimming-bladder clearly proves his degeneration from a higher development of species. Again, the earlier races of the Ana seem to have been covered with hair, and, even to a comparatively recent date, hirsute bushes deformed the very faces of our ancestors, spreading wild over their cheeks and chins, as similar bushes, my poor Tish, spread wild over yours.

"But the object of the higher races of the Ana through countless generations has been to erase all vestige of connection with hairy vertebrata, and they have gradually eliminated that debasing capillary excrement by the law of sexual selection; the Gy-ei naturally preferring youth or the beauty of smooth faces. But the degree of the Frog in the scale of the vertebrata is shown in this, that he has no hair at all, not even on his head. He was born to that hairless perfection which the most beautiful of the Ana, despite the culture of incalculable ages, have not yet attained. The wonderful complication and delicacy of a Frog's nervous system and arterial circulation were shown by this school to be more susceptible of enjoyment than our inferior, or at least simpler, physical frame allows us to be. The examination of a Frog's hand, if I may use that expression, accounted for its keener susceptibility to love, and to social life in general. In fact, gregarious and amatory as are the Ana, Frogs are still more so. In short, these two schools raged against each other; one asserting the An to be the perfected type of the Frog; the other that the Frog was the highest devolopment of the An.

"The moralists were divided in opinion with the naturalists, but the bulk of them sided with the Frog-preference school. They said, with much plausibility, that in moral conduct (viz., in the adherence to rules best adapted to the health and welfare of the individual and the community) there could be no doubt of the vast superiority of the Frog. All history

showed the wholesale immorality of the human race, the complete disregard, even by the most renowned among them, of the laws which they acknowledged to be essential to their own and the general happiness and well-being. But the severest critic of the Frog race could not detect in their manners a single aberration from the moral law tacitly recognized by themselves. And what, after all, can be the profit of civilization if superiority in moral conduct be not the aim for which it strives, and the test by which its progress should be judged?

"In fine, the adherents to this theory presumed that in some remote period the Frog race had been the improved development of the Human; but that, from causes which defied rational conjecture, they had not maintained their original position in the scale of nature; while the Ana, though of inferior organization, had, by dint less of their virtues than their vices, such as ferocity and cunning, gradually acquired ascendancy, much as among the human race itself tribes utterly barbarous have, by superiority in similar vices, utterly destroyed or reduced into insignificance tribes originally excelling them in mental gifts and culture. Unhappilly these disputes became involved with the religious notions of that age; and as society was then administered under the government of the Koom-Posh, who, being the most ignorant, were of course the most inflammable class—the multitude took the whole question out of the hands of the philosophers; political chiefs saw that the Frog dispute, so taken up by the populace, could become a most valuable instrument of their ambition; and for not less than one thousand years war and massacre prevailed, during which period the philosophers on both sides were butchered, and the government of the Koom-Posh itself was happily brought to an end by the ascendancy of a family that clearly established its descent from the aboriginal tadpole, and furnished despotic rulers to the various nations of the Ana. These despots finally disappeared, at least from our communities, as the discovery of vril led to the tranquil institutions under which flourish all the races of the Vril-ya."

"And do no wranglers or philosophers now exist to revive the dispute; or do they all recognize the origin of your race in the tadpole?"

"Nay, such disputes," said Zee, with a lofty smile, "belong to the Pah-bodh of the dark ages, and now only serve for the amusement of infants. When we know the elements out of which our bodies are composed, elements common to the humblest vegetable plants, can it signify whether the All-Wise combined those elements out of one form more than another, in order to create that in which He has placed the capacity to receive the idea of Himself, and all the varied grandeurs of intellect to which that idea gives birth? The An in reality commenced to exist as An with the donation of that capacity, and, with that capacity, the sense to acknowledge that, however through the countless ages his race may improve in wisdom, it can never combine the elements at its command into the form of a tadpole."

"You speak well, Zee," said Aph-Lin; "and it is enough for us short-lived mortals to feel a reasonable assurance that whether the origin of the An was a tadpole or not, he is no more likely to become a tadpole again than the institutions of the Vril-ya are likely to relapse into the heaving quagmire and certain strife-rot of a Koom-Posh."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Vril-ya, being excluded from all sight of the heavenly bodies, and having no other difference between night and day than that which they deem it convenient to make for themselves,—do not, of course, arrive at their divisions of time by the same process that we do; but I found it easy, by the aid of my watch, which I luckily had about me, to compute their time with great nicety. I reserve for a future work on the science and literature of the Vril-ya, should I live to complete it, all details as to the manner in which they arrive at their notation of time: and content myself here with saying, that in point of duration, their year differs very slightly from ours, but that the divisions of their year are by no means the same. Their day (including what we call night) consists of twenty hours of our time, instead of twenty-four, and of course their year comprises the correspondent increase in the number of days by which it is summed up. They subdi-

vide the twenty hours of their day thus—eight hours,* called the "Silent Hours," for repose; eight hours, called the "Earnest Time," for the pursuits and occupations of life; and four hours, called the "Easy Time" (with which what I may term their day closes), allotted to festivities, sport, recreation, or family converse, according to their several tastes and inclinations. But, in truth, out of doors there is no night. They maintain, both in the streets and in the surrounding country, to the limits of their territory, the same degree of light at all hours. Only, within doors, they lower it to a soft twilight during the Silent Hours. They have a great horror of perfect darkness, and their lights are never wholly extinguished. On occasions of festivity they continue the duration of full light, but equally keep note of the distinction between night and day, by mechanical contrivances which answer the purpose of our clocks and watches. They are very fond of music; and it is by music that these chronometers strike the principal divisions of time. At every one of their hours, during their day, the sounds coming from all the timepieces in their public buildings, and caught up, as it were, by those of houses or hamlets scattered amidst the landscapes without the city, have an effect singularly sweet, and yet singularly solemn. But during the Silent Hours these sounds are so subdued as to be only faintly heard by a waking ear.

They have no change of seasons, and, at least in the territory of this tribe, the atmosphere seemed to me very equable, warm as that of an Italian summer, and humid rather than dry; in the forenoon usually very still, but at times invaded by strong blasts from the rocks that made the borders of her domain. But time is the same to them for sowing or reaping as in the Golden Isles of the ancient poets. At the same moment you see the younger plants in blade or bud, the older in ear or fruit. All fruit-bearing plants, however, after fruitage, either shed or change the color of their leaves. But that which interested me most in reckoning up their divisions of time was the ascertainment of the average duration of life amongst them. I found on minute inquiry that this very considerably exceeded the term allotted to us on the upper earth. What seventy years are to us, one hundred years are to them. Nor is this the only advantage they have over us in longevity, for as few among us attain to the age of seventy, so, on the contrary, few among them die before the age of one hundred; and they enjoy a general degree of health and vigor which makes life itself a blessing even to the last. Various causes contribute to this result: the absence of all alcoholic stimulants; temperance in food; more especially, perhaps, a serenity of mind undisturbed by anxious occupations and eager passions.

They are not tormented by our avarice or our ambition; they appear perfectly indifferent even to the desire of fame; they are capable of great affection, but their love shows itself in a tender and cheerful complaisance, and while forming their happiness, seems rarely, if ever, to constitute their woe. As the Gy is sure only to marry where she herself fixes her choice, and as here, not less than above ground, it is the female on whom the happiness of home depends; so the Gy, having chosen the mate she prefers to all others, is lenient to his faults, consults his humors, and does her best to secure his attachment. The death of a beloved one is of course with them, as with us, a cause of sorrow; but not only is death with them so much more rare before that age in which it becomes a release, but when it does occur the survivor takes much more consolation than, I am afraid, the generality of us do, in the certainty of reunion in another and yet happier life.

All these causes, then, concur to their healthful and enjoyable longevity, though, no doubt, much also must be owing to hereditary organization. According to their records, however, in those earlier stages of their society when they lived in communities resembling ours, agitated by fierce competition, their lives were considerably shorter, and their maladies more numerous and grave. They themselves say that the duration of life, too, has increased, and is still on the increase, since their discovery of the invigorating and medicinal properties of vril, applied for remedial purposes. They have few professional and regular practitioners of medicine, and these are chiefly Gy-ei, who, especially if widowed and childless, find great delight in the healing art, and even un-

* For the sake of convenience, I adopt the words hours, days, years, etc., in any general reference to subdivisions of time among the Vril-ya—those terms but loosely corresponding, however, with such subdivisions.

dertake surgical operations in those cases required by accident, or, more rarely, by disease.

They have their diversions and entertainments, and, during the Easy Time of their day, they are wont to assemble in great numbers for those winged sports in the air which I have already described. They have also public halls for music, and even theatres, at which are performed pieces that appeared to me somewhat to resemble the plays of the Chinese—dramas that are thrown back into distant times for their events and personages, in which all classic unities are outrageously violated, and the hero, in one scene a child, in the next is an old man, and so forth. These plays are of very ancient composition. They appeared to me extremely dull, on the whole, but were relieved by startling mechanical contrivances, and a kind of farcical broad humor, and detached passages of great vigor and power expressed in language highly poetical, but somewhat overcharged with metaphor and trope. In fine, they seemed to me very much what the plays of Shakspeare seemed to a Parisian in the time of Louis XV., or perhaps to an Englishman in the reign of Charles II.

The audience, of which the Gy-ei constituted the chief portion, appeared to enjoy greatly the representation of these dramas, which, for so sedate and majestic a race of females, surprised me, till I observed that all the performers were under the age of adolescence, and conjectured truly that the mothers and sisters came to please their children and brothers.

I have said that these dramas are of great antiquity. No new plays, indeed no imaginative works sufficiently important to survive their immediate day, appear to have been composed for several generations. In fact, though there is no lack of new publications, and they have even what may be called newspapers, these are chiefly devoted to mechanical science, reports of new inventions, announcements respecting various details of business—in short, to practical matters. Sometimes a child writes a little tale of adventure, or a young Gy vents her amorous hopes or fears in a poem; but these effusions are of very little merit, and are seldom read except by children and maiden Gy-ei. The most interesting works of a purely literary character are those of explorations and travels into other regions of this nether world, which are generally written by young emigrants, and are read with great avidity by the relations and friends they have left behind.

I could not help expressing to Aph-Lin my surprise that a community in which mechanical science had made so marvellous a progress, and in which intellectual civilization had exhibited itself in realizing those objects for the happiness of the people, which the political philosophers above ground had, after ages of struggle, pretty generally agreed to consider unattainable visions, should, nevertheless, be so wholly without a contemporaneous literature, despite the excellence to which culture had brought a language at once rich and simple, vigorous and musical.

My host replied—"Do you not perceive that a literature such as you mean would be wholly incompatible with that perfection of social or political felicity at which you do us the honor to think we have arrived? We have at last, after centuries of struggle, settled into a form of government with which we are content, and in which, as we allow no differences of rank, and no honors are paid to administrators distinguishing them from others, there is no stimulus given to individual ambition. No one would read works advocating theories that involved any political or social change, and therefore no one writes them. If now and then an An feels himself dissatisfied with our tranquil mode of life, he does not attack it; he goes away. Thus all that part of literature (and to judge by the ancient books in our public libraries, it was once a very large part) which relates to speculative theories on society is become utterly extinct. Again, formerly there was a vast deal written respecting the attributes and essence of the All-Good, and the arguments for and against a future state; but now we all recognize two facts, that there *is* a Divine Being, and there *is* a future state, and we all equally agree that if we wrote our fingers to the bone, we could not throw any light upon the nature and conditions of that future state, or quicken our apprehensions of the attributes and essence of that Divine Being. Thus another part of literature has become also extinct, happily for our race; for in the times when so much was written on subjects which no one could determine, people seemed to live in a perpetual state of quarrel and con-

tention. So, too, a vast part of our ancient literature consists of historical records of wars and revolutions during the times when the Ana lived in large and turbulent societies, each seeking aggrandisement at the expense of the other. You see our serene mode of life now; such it has been for ages. We have no events to chronicle. What more of us can be said than that 'they were born, they were happy, they died?' Coming next to that part of literature which is more under the control of the imagination, such as what we call Glaubsila, or colloquially 'Glaubs,' and you call poetry, the reasons for its decline amongst us are abundantly obvious.

"We find, by referring to the great masterpieces in that department of literature which we all still read with pleasure, but of which none would tolerate imitations, that they consist in the portraiture of passions which we no longer experience—ambition, vengeance, unhallowed love, the thirst for warlike renown, and such like. The old poets lived in an atmosphere impregnated with these passions, and felt vividly what they expressed glowingly. No one can express such passions now, for no one can feel them, or meet with any sympathy in his readers if he did. Again, the old poetry has a main element in its dissection of those complex mysteries of human character which conduce to abnormal vices and crimes, or lead to signal and extraordinary virtues. But our society, having got rid of temptations to any prominent vices and crimes, has necessarily rendered the moral average so equal, that there are no very salient virtues. Without its ancient food of strong passions, vast crimes, heroic excellences, poetry therefore is, if not actually starved to death, reduced to a very meagre diet. There is still the poetry of description—description of rocks, and trees, and waters, and common household life; and our young Gy-ei weave much of this insipid kind of composition into their love verses."

"Such poetry," said I, "might surely be made very charming; and we have critics amongst us who consider it a higher kind than that which depicts the crimes, or analyzes the passions, of man. At all events, poetry of the insipid kind you mention is a poetry that nowadays commands more readers than any other among the people I have left above ground."

"Possibly; but then I suppose the writers take great pains with the language they employ, and devote themselves to the culture and polish of words and rhythms as an art?"

"Certainly they do: all great poets must do that. Though the gift of poetry may be inborn, the gift requires as much care to make it available as a block of metal does to be made into one of your engines."

"And doubtless your poets have some incentive to bestow all those pains upon such verbal prettinesses?"

"Well, I presume their instinct of song would make them sing as the bird does; but to cultivate the song into verbal or artificial prettiness, probably does need an inducement from without, and our poets find it in the love of fame—perhaps, now and then, in the want of money."

"Precisely so. But in our society we attach fame to nothing which man, in that moment of his duration which is called 'life,' can perform. We should soon lose that equality which constitutes the felicitous essence of our commonwealth if we selected any individual for pre-eminent praise: pre-eminent praise would confer pre-eminent power, and the moment it were given, evil passions, now dormant, would awake; other men would immediately covet praise, then would arise envy, and with envy hate, and with hate calumny and persecution. Our history tells us that most of the poets and most of the writers who, in the old time, were favored with the greatest praise, were also assailed by the greatest vituperation, and even, on the whole, rendered very unhappy, partly by the attacks of jealous rivals, partly by the diseased mental constitution which an acquired sensitiveness to praise and to blame tends to engender. As for the stimulus of want; in the first place, no man in our community knows the goad of poverty; and, secondly, if he did, almost every occupation would be more lucrative than writing.

"Our public libraries contain all the books of the past which time has preserved; those books, for the reasons above stated, are infinitely better than any can write nowadays, and they are open to all to read without cost. We are not such fools as to pay for reading inferiors books, when we can read superior books for nothing."

"With us, novelty has an attraction; and a

new book, if bad, is read when an old book, though good, is neglected."

"Novelty, to barbarous states of society struggling in despair for something better, has no doubt an attraction, denied to us, who see nothing to gain in novelties; but, after all, it is observed by one of our great authors four thousand years ago, that 'he who studies old books will always find in them something new, and he who reads new books will always find in them something old.' But to return to the question you have raised, there being then among us no stimulus to painstaking labor, whether in desire of fame or in pressure of want, such as have the poetic temperament, no doubt, vent it in song, as you say the bird sings; but for lack of elaborate culture it fails of an audience, and, failing of an audience, dies out, of itself, amidst the ordinary avocations of life."

"But how is it that these discouragements to the cultivation of literature do not operate against that of science?"

"Your question amazes me. The motive to science is the love of truth apart from all consideration of fame, and science with us too is devoted almost solely to practical uses, essential to our social conservation and the comforts of our daily life. No fame is asked by the inventor, and none is given to him; he enjoys an occupation congenial to his tastes, and needing no wear and tear of the passions. Man must have exercise for his mind as well as body; and continuous exercise, rather than violent, is best for both. Our most ingenious cultivators of science are, as a general rule, the longest lived and the most free from disease. Painting is an amusement to many, but the art is not what it was in former times, when the great painters in our various communities vied with each other for the prize of a golden crown, which gave them a social rank equal to that of the kings under whom they lived.

"You will thus doubtless have observed in our archæological department how superior in point of art the pictures were several thousand years ago. Perhaps it is because music is, in reality, more allied to science than it is to poetry, that, of all the pleasurable arts, music is that which flourishes the most amongst us. Still, even in music the absence of stimulus in praise or fame has served to prevent any great superiority of one individual over another; and we rather excel in choral music, with the aid of our vast mechanical instruments, in which we make great use of the agency of water,* than in single performers. We have had scarcely any original composer for some ages. Our favorite airs are very ancient in substance, but have admitted many complicated variations by inferior, though ingenious, musicians."

"Are there no political societies among the Ana which are animated by those passions, subjected to those crimes, and admitting those disparities in condition, in intellect, and in morality, which the state of your tribe, or indeed of the Vril-ya generally, has left behind in its progress to perfection? If so, among such societies perhaps Poetry and her sister arts still continue to be honored and to improve?"

"There are such societies in remote regions, but we do not admit them within the pale of civilized communities; we scarcely even give them the name of Ana, and certainly not that of Vril-ya. They are barbarians, living chiefly in that low stage of being, Koom-Posh, tending necessarily to its own hideous dissolution in Glek-Nas. Their wretched existence is passed in perpetual contest and perpetual change. When they do not fight with their neighbors, they fight among themselves. They are divided into sections, which abuse, plunder, and sometimes murder each other, and on the most frivolous points of difference that would be unintelligible to us if we had not read history, and seen that we too have passed through the same early state of ignorance and barbarism. Any trifle is sufficient to set them together by the ears. They pretend to be all equals, and the more they have struggled to be so, by removing old distinctions and starting afresh, the more glaring and intolerable the disparity becomes, because nothing in hereditary affections and associations is left to soften the one naked distinction between the many who have nothing and the few who have much.

"Of course the many hate the few, but without the few they could not live. The many are always assailing the few; sometimes they exterminate the few; but as soon as they have done so, a new few starts out of the

* This may remind the student of Nero's invention of a musical machine, by which water was made to perform the part of an orchestra, and on which he was employed when the conspiracy against him broke out.

many, and is harder to deal with than the old few. For where societies are large, and competition to have something is the predominant fever, there must be always many losers and few gainers. In short, the people I speak of are savages groping their way in the dark towards some gleam of light, and would demand our commiseration for their infirmities, if, like all savages, they did not provoke their own destruction by their arrogance and cruelty. Can you imagine that creatures of this kind, armed only with such miserable weapons as you may see in our museum of antiquities, clumsy iron tubes charged with saltpetre, have more than once threatened with destruction a tribe of the Vril-ya, which dwells nearest to them, because they say they have thirty millions of population—and that tribe may have fifty thousand—if the latter do not accept their notions of Soc-Sec (money-getting) on some trading principles which they have the impudence to call a 'law of civilization?'"

"But thirty millions of population are formidable odds against fifty thousand!"

My host stared at me astonished. "Stranger," said he, "you could not have heard me say that this threatened tribe belongs to the Vril-ya; and it only waits for these savages to declare war, in order to commission some half a dozen small children to sweep away their whole population."

As these words I felt a thrill of horror, recognizing much more affinity with "the savages," than I did with the Vril-ya, and remembering all I had said in praise of the glorious American institutions which Aph-Lin stigmatized as Koom-Posh. Recovering my self-possession, I asked if there were modes of transit by which I could safely visit this temerarious and remote people.

"You can travel with safety, by vril agency, either along the ground or amid the air, throughout all the range of the communities with which we are allied and akin; but I cannot vouch for your safefy in barbarous nations governed by different laws from ours; nations, indeed, so benighted that there are among them large numbers who actually live by stealing from each other, and one could not with safety in the Silent Hours even leave the doors of one's own house open."

Here our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Taë, who came to inform us that he, having been deputed to discover and destroy the enormous reptile which I had seen on my first arrival, had been on the watch for it ever since his visit to me, and had begun to suspect that my eyes had deceived me, or that the creature had made its way through the cavities within the rocks to the wild regions in which dwelt its kindred race,—when it gave evidences of its whereabouts by a great devastation of the herbage bordering one of the lakes. "And," said Taë, "I feel sure that within that lake it is now hiding. So" (turning to me) "I thought it might amuse you to accompany me to see the way we destroy such unpleasant visitors." As I looked at the face of the young child, and called to mind the enormous size of the creature he proposed to exterminate, I felt myself shudder with fear for him, and perhaps fear for myself, if I accompanied him in such a chase. But my curiosity to witness the destructive effects of the boasted vril, and my unwillingness to lower myself in the eyes of an infant by betraying apprehensions of personal safety, prevailed over my first impulse. Accordingly, I thanked Taë for his courteous consideration for my amusement, and professed my willingness to set out with him on so diverting an enterprise.

CHAPTER XVIII.

As Taë and myself, on quitting the town, and leaving to the left the main road which led to it, struck into the fields, the strange and solemn beauty of the landscape, lighted up, by numberless lamps, to the verge of the horizon, fascinated my eyes, and rendered me for some time an inattentive listener to the talk of my companion.

Along our way various operations of agriculture were being carried on by machinery, the forms of which were new to me, and for the most part very graceful; for among these people art being so cultivated for the sake of mere utility, exhibits itself in adorning or refining the shapes of useful objects. Precious metals and gems are so profuse among them that they are lavished on things devoted to purposes the most commonplace; and their love of utility leads them to beautify its tools.

and quickens their imagination in a way unknown to themselves.

In all service, whether in or out of doors, they make great use of automaton figures, which are so ingenious, and so pliant to the operations of vril, that they actually seem gifted with reason. It was scarcely possible to distinguish the figures I beheld, apparently guiding or superintending the rapid movements of vast engines, from human forms endowed with thought.

By degrees, as we continued to walk on, my attention became roused by the lively and acute remarks of my companion. The intelligence of the children among this race is marvellously precocious, perhaps from the habit of having entrusted to them, at so early an age, the toils and responsibilities of middle age. Indeed, in conversing with Taë, I felt as if talking with some superior and observant man of my own years. I asked him if he could form any estimate of the number of communities into which the race of the Vril-ya is subdivided.

"Not exactly," he said, "because they multiply, of course, every year as the surplus of each community is drafted off. But I heard my father say that, according to the last report, there were a million and a half of communities speaking our language, and adopting our institutions and forms of life and government; but, I believe, with some differences, about which you had better ask Zee. She knows more than most of the Ana do. An An cares less for things that do not concern him than a Gy does; the Gy-ei are inquisitive creatures."

"Does each community restrict itself to the same number of families or amount of population that you do?"

"No; some have much smaller populations, some have larger—varying according to the extent of the country they appropriate, or to the degree of excellence to which they have brought their machinery. Each community sets its own limit according to circumstances, taking care always that there shall never arise any class of poor by the pressure of population upon the productive powers of the domain, and that no state shall be too large for a government resembling that of a single well-ordered family. I imagine that no Vril community exceeds thirty thousand households. But, as a general rule, the smaller the community, provided there be hands enough to do justice to the capacities of the territory it occupies, the richer each individual is, and the larger the sum contributed to the general treasury,—above all, the happier and the more tranquil is the whole political body, and the more perfect the products of its industry.

"The state which all tribes of the Vril-ya acknowledge to be the highest in civilization, and which has brought the vril force to its fullest development, is perhaps the smallest. It limits itself to four thousand families; but every inch of its territory is cultivated to the utmost perfection of garden ground; its machinery excels that of every other tribe; and there is no product of its industry in any department which is not sought for, at extraordinary prices, by each community of our race. All our tribes make this state their model, considering that we should reach the highest state of civilization allowed to mortals if we could unite the greatest degree of happiness with the highest degree of intellectual achievement; and it is clear that the smaller the society the less difficult that will be. Ours is too large for it."

This reply set me thinking. I reminded myself of that little state of Athens, with only twenty thousand free citizens, and which to this day our mightiest nations regard as the supreme guide and model in all departments of intellect. But then Athens permitted fierce rivalry and perpetual change, and was certainly not happy. Rousing myself from the reverie into which these reflections had plunged me, I brought back our talk to the subjects connected with emigration.

"But," said I, "when, I suppose yearly, a certain number among you agree to quit home and found a new community elsewhere, they must necessarily be very few, and scarcely sufficient, even with the help of the machines they take with them, to clear the ground and build towns, and form a civilized state with the comforts and luxuries in which they had been reared."

"You mistake. All the tribes of the Vril-ya are in constant communication with each other, and settle among themselves each year what proportion and animal community will unite with the en n armed with other so as to form a state of air flight, and fell d first put up, pa and the place for emigration erations of partridges

is agreed upon at least a year before, and pioneers sent from each state to level rocks, and embank waters, and construct houses; so that when the emigrants at last go, they find a city already made, and a country around it at least partially cleared. Our hardy life as children makes us take cheerfully to travel and adventure. I mean to emigrate myself when of age."

"Do the emigrants always select places hitherto uninhabited and barren?"

"As yet generally, because it is our rule never to destroy except where necessary to our wellbeing. Of course, we cannot settle in lands already occupied by the Vril-ya; and if we take the cultivated lands of the other races of Ana, we must utterly destroy the previous inhabitants. Sometimes, as it is, we take waste spots, and find that a troublesome, quarrelsome race of Ana, especially if under the administration of Koom-Posh or Glek-Nas, resents our vicinity, and picks a quarrel with us; then, of course, as menacing our welfare, we destroy it: there is no coming to terms of peace with a race so idiotic that it is always changing the form of government which represents it. Koom-Posh," said the child, emphatically, "is bad enough, still it has brains, though at the back of its head, and is not without a heart; but in Glek-Nas the brain and heart of the creatures disappear, and they become all jaws, claws, and belly."

"You express yourself strongly. Allow me to inform you that I myself, and I am proud to say it, am the citizen of a Koom-Posh."

"I no longer," answered Taë, "wonder to see you here so far from your home. What was the condition of your native community before it became a Koom-Posh?"

"A settlement of emigrants—like those settlements which your tribe sends forth—but so far unlike your settlements, that it was dependent on the state from which it came. It shook off that yoke, and, crowned with eternal glory, became a Koom-Posh."

"Eternal glory! how long has the Koom-Posh lasted?"

"About 100 years."

"The length of an An's life—a very young community. In much less than another 100 years your Koom-Posh will be a Glek-Nas."

"Nay, the oldest states in the world I come from have such faith in its duration, that they are all gradually shaping their institutions so as to melt into ours; and their most thoughtful politicians say that, whether they like it or not, the inevitable tendency of these old states is towards Koom-Posh-erie."

"The old states?"

"Yes, the old states."

"With populations very small in proportion to the area of productive land?"

"On the contrary, with populations very large in proportion to that area."

"I see! old states indeed!—so old as to become drivelling if they don't pack off that surplus population as we do ours—very old states!—very, very old! Pray, Tish, do you think it wise for very old men to try to turn head-over-heels as very young children do? And if you ask them why they attempted such antics, should you not laugh if they answered that by imitating very young children they could become very young children themselves? Ancient history abounds with instances of this sort a great many thousand years ago—and in every instance a very old state that played at Koom-Posh soon tumbled into Glek-Nas. Then, in horror of its own self, it cried out for a master, as an old man in his dotage cries out for a nurse; and after a succession of masters or nurses, more or less long, that very old state died out of history. A very old state attempting Koom-Posh-erie is like a very old man who pulls down the house to which he has been accustomed, but has so exhausted his vigor in pulling down, that all he can do in the way of rebuilding is to run up a crazy hut, in which himself and his successors whine out 'How the wind blows! How the walls shake!'"

"My dear Taë, I make all excuse for your unenlightened prejudices, which every school-boy educated in a Koom-Posh could easily controvert, though he might not be so precociously learned in ancient history as you appear to be."

"I learned! not a bit of it. But would a school-boy, educated in your Koom-Posh, ask his great-great-grandfather or great-great-grandmother to stand on his or her head with the feet uppermost? and if the poor old folks hesitated—say, 'What do you fear?—see how I do it!'"

"Taë, I disdain to argue with a child of your age. I repeat, I make allowances for your

want of that culture which a Koom-Posh alone can bestow."

"I, in my turn," answered Taë, with an air of the suave but lofty good breeding which characterizes his race, "not only make allowances for you as not educated among the Vril-ya, but I entreat you to vouchsafe me your pardon for insufficient respect to the habits and opinions of so amiable a—Tish!"

I ought before to have observed that I was commonly called Tish by my host and his family, as being a polite and indeed a pet name, metaphorically signifying a small barbarian, literally a Froglet; the children apply it endearingly to the tame species of Frog which they keep in their gardens.

We had now reached the banks of a lake, and Taë here paused to point out to me the ravages made in fields skirting it. "The enemy certainly lies within these waters," said Taë. "Observe what shoals of fish are crowded together at the margin. Even the great fishes with the small ones, who are their habitual prey and who generally shun them, all forget their instincts in the presence of a common destroyer. This reptile certainly must belong to the class of the Krek-a, a class more devouring than any other, and said to be among the few surviving species of the world's dreadest inhabitants before the Ana were created. The appetite of a Krek is insatiable—it feeds alike upon vegetable and animal life; but for the swift-footed creatures of the elk species it is too slow in its movements. Its favorite dainty is an An when it can catch him unawares; and hence the Ana destroy it relentlessly whenever it enters their dominion. I have heard that when our forefathers first cleared this country, these monsters, and others like them, abounded, and, vril being then undiscovered, many of our race were devoured. It was impossible to exterminate them wholly till that discovery which constitutes the power and sustains the civilization of our race. But after the uses of vril became familiar to us, all creatures inimical to us were soon annihilated. Still, once a year or so, one of these enormous reptiles wanders from the unreclaimed and savage districts beyond, and within my memory one seized upon a young Gy who was bathing in this very lake. Had she been on land and armed with her staff, it would not have dared even to show itself; for, like all savage creatures, the reptile has a marvellous instinct which warns it against the bearer of the vril wand. How they teach their young to avoid him, though seen for the first time, is one of those mysteries which you may ask Zee to explain, for I cannot.* So long as I stand here, the monster will not stir from its lurking-place; but we must now decoy it forth."

"Will not that be difficult?"

"Not at all. Seat yourself yonder on that crag (about one hundred yards from the bank), while I retire to a distance. In a short time the reptile will catch sight or scent of you, and, perceiving that you are no vril-bearer, will come forth to devour you. As soon as it is fairly out of the water, it becomes my prey."

"Do you mean to tell me that I am to be the decoy to that horrible monster which could engulf me within its jaws in a second! I beg to decline."

The child laughed. "Fear nothing," said he; "only sit still."

Instead of obeying this command, I made a bound, and was about to take fairly to my heels, when Taë touched me lightly on the shoulder, and, fixing his eyes steadily on mine, I was rooted to the spot. All power of volition left me. Submissive to the infant's gesture, I followed him to the crag he had indicated, and seated myself there in silence. Most readers have seen something of the effects of electro-biology, whether genuine or spurious. No professor of that doubtful craft had ever been able to influence a thought or a movement of mine, but I was a mere machine at the will of this terrible child. Meanwhile he expanded his wings, soared aloft, and alighted amidst a copse at the brow of a hill at some distance.

I was alone; and turning my eyes with an indescribable sensation of horror towards the lake, I kept them fixed on its water, spellbound. It might be ten or fifteen minutes, to me it seemed ages, before the still surface, gleaming under the lamplight, began to be agitated towards the centre. At the same time the shoals of fish near the margin evinced their sense of the enemy's approach by splash

* The reptile in this instinct does but resemble our wild birds and animals, which will not come in reach of a man armed with a gun. When the electric wires were first put up, partridges struck against them in their flight, and fell down wounded. No younger generations of partridges meet with a similar accident.

and leap and bubbling circle. I could detect their hurried flight hither and thither, some even casting themselves ashore. A long, dark, undulous furrow came moving along the waters, nearer and nearer, till the vast head of the reptile emerged—its jaws bristling with fangs, and its dull eyes fixing themselves hungrily on the spot where I sat motionless. And now its fore feet were on the strand—now its enormous breast, scaled on either side as in armor, in the centre showing corrugated skin of a dull venomous yellow; and now its whole length was on the land, a hundred feet or more from the jaw to the tail. Another stride of those ghastly feet would have brought it to the spot where I sat. There was but a moment between me and this grim form of death, when what seemed a flash of lightning shot through the air, smote, and, for a space in time briefer than that in which a man can draw his breath, enveloped the monster; and then, as the flash vanished, there lay before me a blackened, charred, smouldering mass, a something gigantic, but of which even the outlines of form were burned away, and rapidly crumbling into dust and ashes. I remained still seated, still speechless, ice-cold with a new sensation of dread: what had been horror was now awe.

I felt the child's hand on my head—fear left me—the spell was broken—I rose up. "You see with what ease the Vril-ya destroy their enemies," said Taë; and then, moving towards the bank, he contemplated the smouldering relics of the monster, and said quietly, "I have destroyed larger creatures, but none with so much pleasure. Yes, it *is* a Krek; what suffering it must have inflicted while it lived!" Then he took up the poor fishes that had flung themselves ashore, and restored them mercifully to their native element.

CHAPTER XIX.

As we walked back to the town, Taë took a new and circuitous way, in order to show me what, to use a familiar term, I will call the "Station," from which emigrants or travellers to other communities commence their journeys. I had, on a former occasion, expressed a wish to see their vehicles. These I found to be of two kinds, one for land-journeys, one for aerial voyages: the former were of all sizes and forms, some not larger than an ordinary carriage, some movable houses of one storey and containing several rooms, furnished according to the ideas of comfort or luxury which are entertained by the Vril-ya. The aerial vehicles were of light substances, not the least resembling our balloons, but rather our boats and pleasure-vessels, with helm and rudder, with large wings as paddles, and a central machine worked by vril. All the vehicles both for land or air were indeed worked by that potent and mysterious agency.

I saw a convoy set out on its journey, but it had few passengers, containing chiefly articles of merchandise, and was bound to a neighboring community; for among all the tribes of the Vril-ya there is considerable commercial interchange. I may here observe, that their money currency does not consist of the precious metals, which are too common among them for that purpose. The smaller coins in ordinary use are manufactured from a peculiar fossil shell, the comparatively scarce remnant of some very early deluge, or other convulsion of nature, by which a species has become extinct. It is minute, and flat as an oyster, and takes a jewel-like polish. This coinage circulates among all the tribes of the Vril-ya. Their larger transactions are carried on much like ours, by bills of exchange, and thin metallic plates which answer the purpose of our bank-notes.

Let me take this occasion of adding that the taxation among the tribe I became acquainted with was very considerable, compared with the amount of population. But I never heard that any one grumbled at it, for it was devoted to purposes of universal utility, and indeed necessary to the civilization of the tribe. The cost of lighting so large a range of country, of providing for emigration, of maintaining the public buildings at which the various operations of national intellect were carried on, from the first education of an infant to the departments to which the College of Sages were perpetually trying new experiments in mechanical science: all these involved the necessity for considerable state funds. To these I must add an item that struck me as very singular. I have said that all the human labor required by the state is carried on by children up to the marriageable age. For this labor the state pays, and at a

rate immeasurably higher than our remuneration to labor even in the United States. According to their theory, every child, male or female, on attaining the marriageable age, and there terminating the period of labor, should have acquired enough for an independent competence during life. As, no matter what the disparity of fortune in the parents, all the children must equally serve, so all are equally paid according to their several ages or the nature of their work. When the parents or friends choose to retain a child in their own service, they must pay into the public fund in the same ratio as the state pays to the children it employs; and this sum is handed over to the child when the period of service expires. This practice serves, no doubt, to render the notion of social equality familiar and agreeable; and if it may be said that all the children form a democracy, no less truly it may be said that all the adults form an aristocracy. The exquisite politeness and refinement of manners among the Vril-ya, the generosity of their sentiments, the absolute leisure they enjoy for following out their own private pursuits, the amenities of their domestic intercourse, in which they seem as members of one noble order than can have no distrust of each other's word or deed, all combine to make the Vril-ya the most perfect nobility which a political disciple of Plato or Sidney could conceive for the ideal of an aristocratic republic.

CHAPTER XX.

From the date of the expedition with Taë which I have just narrated, the child paid me frequent visits. He had taken a liking to me, which I cordially returned. Indeed, as he was not yet twelve years old, and had not commenced the course of scientific studies with which childhood closes in that country, my intellect was less inferior to his than to that of the elder members of his race, especially of the Gy-ei, and most especially of the accomplished Zee. The children of the Vril-ya, having upon their minds the weight of so many active duties and grave responsibilities, are not generally mirthful; but Taë, with all his wisdom, had much of the playful good-humor one often finds the characteristic of elderly men of genius. He felt that sort of pleasure in my society which a boy of a similar age in the upper world has in the company of a pet dog or monkey. It amused him to try and teach me the ways of his people, as it amuses a nephew of mine to make his poodle walk on his hind legs or jump through a hoop. I willingly lent myself to such experiments, but I never achieved the success of the poodle. I was very much interested at first in the attempt to ply the wings which the youngest of the Vril-ya use as nimbly and easily as ours do their legs and arms; but my efforts were attended with contusions serious enough to make me abandon them in despair.

The wings, as I before said, are very large, reaching to the knee, and in repose thrown back so as to form a very graceful mantle. They are composed from the feathers of a gigantic bird that abounds in the rocky heights of the country—the color mostly white, but sometimes with reddish streaks. They are fastened round the shoulders with light but strong springs of steel; and, when expanded, the arms slide through loops for that purpose, forming, as it were, a stout central membrane. As the arms are raised, a tubular lining beneath the vest or tunic becomes, by mechanical contrivance, inflated with air, increased or diminished at will by the movement of the arms, and serving to buoy the whole form as on bladders. The wings and the balloon-like apparatus are highly charged with vril; and when the body is thus wafted upward, it seems to become singularly lightened of its weight. I found it easy enough to soar from the ground; indeed, when the wings were spread it was scarcely possible not to soar, but then came the difficulty and the danger. I utterly failed in the power to use and direct the pinions, though I am considered among my own race unusually alert and ready in bodily exercises, and am a very practised swimmer. I could only make the most confused and blundering efforts at flight. I was the servant of the wings; the wings were not my servants—they were beyond my control; and when by a violent strain of muscle, and, I must fairly own, in that abnormal strength which is given by excessive fright, I curbed their gyrations and brought them near to the body, it seemed as if I lost the sustaining power stored in them and the connecting bladders, as when air is let out of a balloon,

and found myself precipitated again to earth; saved, indeed, by some spasmodic flutterings, from being dashed to pieces, but not saved from the bruises and the stun of a heavy fall. I would, however, have persevered in my attempts, but for the advice or the commands of the scientific Zee, who had benevolently accompanied my flutterings, and indeed, on the last occasion, flying just under me, received my form as it fell on her own expanded wings, and preserved me from breaking my head on the roof of the pyramid from which we had ascended.

"I see," she said, "that your trials are in vain, not from the fault of the wings and their appurtenances, nor from any imperfectness and malformation of your own corpuscular system, but from irremediable, because organic, defect in your power of volition. Learn that the connection between the will and the agencies of that fluid which has been subjected to the control of the Vril-ya was never established by the first discoverers, never achieved by a single generation; it has gone on increasing, like other properties of race, in proportion as it has been uniformly transmitted from parent to child, so that, at last, it has become an instinct; and an infant An of our race, wills to fly as intuitively and unconsciously as he wills to walk. He thus plies his invented or artificial wings with as much safety as a bird plies those with which it is born. I did not think sufficiently of this when I allowed you to try an experiment which allured me, for I longed to have in you a companion. I shall abandon the experiment now. Your life is becoming dear to me." Herewith the Gy's voice and face softened, and I felt more seriously alarmed than I had been in my previous flights.

Now that I am on the subject of wings, I ought not to omit mention of a custom among the Gy-ei which seems to me very pretty and tender in the sentiment it implies. A Gy wears wings habitually while yet a virgin—she joins the Ana in their aerial sports—she adventures alone and afar into the wilder regions of the sunless world: in the boldness and height of her soarings, not less than in the grace of her movements, she excels the opposite sex. But from the day of marriage, she wears wings no more, she suspends them with her own willing hand over the nuptial couch, never to be resumed unless the marriage tie be severed by divorce or death.

Now when Zee's voice and eyes thus softened—and at that softening I prophetically recoiled and shuddered—Taë, who had accompanied us in our flights, but who, child-like, had been much more amused with my awkwardness than sympathizing in my fears or aware of my danger, hovered over us, poised amidst the still radiant air, serene and motionless on his outspread wings, and hearing the endearing words of the young Gy, laughed aloud. Said he, "If the Tish cannot learn the use of wings, you may still be his companion, Zee, for you can suspend your own."

CHAPTER XXI.

I HAD for some time observed in my host's highly informed and powerfully proportioned daughter that kindly and protective sentiment which, whether above the earth or below it, an all-wise Providence has bestowed upon the feminine division of the human race. But until very lately I had ascribed it to that affection for "pets" which a human female at every age shares with a human child. I now became painfully aware that the feeling with which Zee deigned to regard me was different from that which I had inspired in Taë. But this conviction gave me none of that complacent gratification which the vanity of man ordinarily conceives from a flattering appreciation of his personal merits on the part of the fair sex; on the contrary, it inspired me with fear. Yet of all the Gy-ei in the community, if Zee were perhaps the wisest and the strongest, she was, by common repute, the gentlest, and she was certainly the most popularly beloved. The desire to aid, to succor, to protect, to comfort, to bless, seemed to pervade her whole being.

Though the complicated miseries that originate in penury and guilt are unknown to the social system of the Vril-ya, still, no sage had yet discovered in vril an agency which could banish sorrow from life; and wherever amongst her people sorrow found its way, there Zee followed in the mission of comforter. Did some sister Gy fail to secure the love she sighed for? Zee sought her out, and brought all the resources of her lore, and all the consolations of her sympathy, to bear upon a grief that so needs the solace of a confidant. In the rare

cases, when grave illness seized upon childhood or youth, and the cases, less rare, when, in the hardy and adventurous probation of infants, some accident, attended with pain and injury, occurred, Zee forsook her studies and her sports, and became the healer and the nurse. Her favorite flights were towards the extreme boundaries of the domain where children were stationed on guard against outbreaks of warring forces in nature, or the invasions of devouring animals, so that she might warn them of any peril which her knowledge detected or foresaw, or be at hand if any harm should befall.

Nay, even in the exercise of her scientific acquirements there was a concurrent benevolence of purpose and will. Did she learn any novelty in invention that would be useful to the practitioner of some special art or craft? she hastened to communicate and explain it. Was some veteran sage of the College perplexed and wearied with the toil of an abstruse study? she would patiently devote herself to his aid, work out details for him, sustain his spirits with her hopeful smile, quicken his wit with her luminous suggestion, be to him, as it were, his own good genius made visible as the strengthener and inspirer. The same tenderness she exhibited to the inferior creatures. I have often known her bring home some sick and wounded animal, and tend and cherish it as a mother would tend and cherish her stricken child. Many a time when I sat in the balcony, or hanging garden, on which my window opened, I have watched her rising in the air on her radiant wings, and in a few moments groups of infants below, catching sight of her, would soar upwards with joyous sounds of greeting; clustering and sporting around her, so that she seemed a very centre of innocent delight. When I have walked with her amidst the rocks and valleys without the city, the elk-deer would scent or see her from afar, come bounding up, eager for the caress of her hand, or follow her footsteps, till dismissed by some musical whisper that the creature had learned to comprehend.

It is the fashion among the virgin Gy-ei to wear on their foreheads a circlet, or coronet, with gems resembling opals, arranged in four points or rays like stars. These are lustreless in ordinary use, but if touched by the vril wand they take a clear lambent flame, which illuminates, yet not burns. This serves as an ornament in their festivities, and as a lamp, if, in their wanderings beyond their artificial lights, they have to traverse the dark. There are times, when I have seen Zee's thoughtful majesty of face lighted up by this crowning halo, that I could scarcely believe her to be a creature of mortal birth, and bent my head before her as the vision of a being among the celestial orders. But never once did my heart feel for this lofty type of the noblest womanhood a sentiment of human love. Is it that, among the race I belong to, man's pride so far influences his passions that woman loses to him her special charm of woman if he feels her to be in all things eminently superior to himself? But by what strange infatuation could this peerless daughter of a race which, in the supremacy of its powers and the felicity of its conditions, ranked all other races in the category of barbarians, have deigned to honor me with her preference? In personal qualifications, though I passed for good-looking among the people I came from, the handsomest of my countrymen might have seemed insignificant and homely beside the grand and serene type of beauty which characterized the aspect of the Vril-ya.

That novelty, the very difference between myself and those to whom Zee was accustomed, might serve to bias her fancy was probable enough, and as the reader will see later, such a cause might suffice to account for the predilection with which I was distinguished by a young Gy scarcely out of her childhood, and very inferior in all respects to Zee. But whoever will consider those tender characteristics which I have just ascribed to the daughter of Aph-Lin, may readily conceive that the main cause of my attraction to her was in her instinctive desire to cherish, to comfort, to protect, and, in protecting, to sustain and to exalt. Thus, when I look back, I account for the only weakness unworthy of her lofty nature, which bowed the daughter of the Vril-ya to a woman's affection for one so inferior to herself as was her father's guest. But be the cause what it may, the consciousness that I had inspired such affection thrilled me with awe—a moral awe of her very perfections, of her mysterious powers, of the inseparable distinctions between her race and my own; and with that awe, I must confess to my shame, there com-

bined the more material and ignoble dread of the perils to which her preference would expose me.

Could it be supposed for a moment that the parents and friends of this exalted being could view without indignation and disgust the possibility of an alliance between herself and a Tish? Her they could not punish, her they could not confine nor restrain. Neither in domestic nor in political life do they acknowledge any law of force amongst themselves; but they could effectually put an end to her infatuation by a flash of vril inflicted upon me.

Under these anxious circumstances, fortunately, my conscience and sense of honor were free from reproach. It became clearly my duty, if Zee's preference continued manifest, to intimate it to my host, with, of course, all the delicacy which is ever to be preserved by a well-bred man in confiding to another any degree of favor by which one of the fair sex may condescend to distinguish him. Thus, at all events, I should be freed from responsibility or suspicion of voluntary participation in the sentiment of Zee; and the superior wisdom of my host might probably suggest some sage extrication from my perilous dilemma. In this resolve I obeyed the ordinary instinct of civilized and moral man, who, erring though he be, still generally prefers the right course in those cases where it is obviously against his inclinations, his interests, and his safety to elect the wrong one.

CHAPTER XXII.

As the reader has seen, Aph-Lin had not favored my general and unrestricted intercourse with his countrymen. Though relying on my promise to abstain from giving any information as to the world I had left, and still more on the promise of those to whom had been put the same request, not to question me, which Zee had exacted from Tae, yet he did not feel sure that, if I were allowed to mix with the strangers whose curiosity the sight of me had aroused, I could sufficiently guard myself against their inquiries. When I went out, therefore, it was never alone; I was always accompanied either by one of my host's family, or my child-friend Tae. Bra, Aph-Lin's wife, seldom stirred beyond the gardens which surrounded the house, and was fond of reading the ancient literature, which contained something of romance and adventure not to be found in the writings of recent ages, and presented pictures of a life unfamiliar to her experience and interesting to her imagination; pictures, indeed, of a life more resembling that which we lead every day above ground, colored by our sorrows, sins, and passions, and much to her what the Tales of the Genii or the Arabian Nights are to us. But her love of reading did not prevent Bra from the discharge of her duties as mistress of the largest household in the city. She went daily the round of the chambers, and saw that the automata and other mechanical contrivances were in order, that the numerous children employed by Aph-Lin, whether in his private or public capacity, were carefully tended. Bra also inspected the accounts of the whole estate, and it was her great delight to assist her husband in the business connected with his office as chief administrator of the Lighting Department, so that her avocations necessarily kept her much within doors. The two sons were both completing their education at the College of Sages; and the elder, who had a strong passion for mechanics, and especially for works connected with the machinery of timepieces and automata, had decided in devoting himself to these pursuits, and was now occupied in constructing a shop, or warehouse, at which his inventions could be exhibited and sold. The younger son preferred farming and rural occupations; and when not attending the college, at which he chiefly studied the theories of agriculture, was much absorbed by his practical application of that science to his father's lands. It will be seen by this how completely equality of ranks is established among this people—a shopkeeper being of exactly the same grade in estimation as the large landed proprietor. Aph-Lin was the wealthiest member of the community, and his eldest son preferred keeping a shop to any other avocation, nor was this choice thought to show any want of elevated notions on his part.

This young man had been much interested in examining my watch, the works of which were new to him, and was greatly pleased when I made him a present of it. Shortly after, he returned the gift with interest, by a watch of

his own construction, marking both the time as in my watch and the time as kept among the Vril-ya. I have that watch still, and it has been much admired by many among the most eminent watchmakers of London and Paris. It is of gold, with diamond hands and figures, and it plays a favorite tune among the Vril-ya in striking the hours: it only requires to be wound up once in ten months, and has never gone wrong since I had it. These young brothers being thus occupied, my usual companions in that family, when I went abroad, were my host or his daughter. Now, agreeably with the honorable conclusions I had come to, I began to excuse myself from Zee's invitations to go out alone with her, and seized an occasion when that learned Gy was delivering a lecture at the College of Sages to ask Aph-Lin to show me his country-seat. As this was at some little distance, and as Aph-Lin was not fond of walking, while I had discreetly relinquished all attempts at flying, we proceeded to our destination in one of the aerial boats belonging to my host. A child of eight years old, in his employ, was our conductor. My host and myself reclined on cushions, and I found the movement very easy and luxurious.

"Aph-Lin," said I, "you will not, I trust, be displeased with me, if I ask your permission to travel for a short time, and visit other tribes or communities of your illustrious race. I have also a strong desire to see those nations which do not adopt your institutions, and which you consider as savages. It would interest me greatly to notice what are the distinctions between them and the races whom we consider civilized in the world I have left."

"It is utterly impossible that you should go hence alone," said Aph-Lin. "Even among the Vril-ya you would be exposed to great dangers. Certain peculiarities of formation and color, and the extraordinary phenomenon of hirsute bushes upon your cheeks and chin, denoting in you a species of An distinct alike from our race and any known race of barbarians yet extant, would attract, of course, the special attention of the College of Sages in whatever community of Vril-ya you visited, and it would depend upon the individual temper of some individual sage whether you would be received, as you have been here, hospitably, or whether you would not be at once dissected for scientific purposes. Know that when the Tur first took you to his house, and while you were there put to sleep by Tae in order to recover from your previous pain or fatigue, the sages summoned by the Tur were divided in opinion whether you were a harmless or an obnoxious animal. During your unconscious state your teeth were examined, and they clearly showed that you were not only graminivorous, but carnivorous. Carnivorous animals of your size are always destroyed, as being of dangerous and savage nature. Our teeth, as you have doubtless observed,* are not those of the creatures who devour flesh. It is, indeed, maintained by Zee and other philosophers, that as, in remote ages, the Ana did prey upon living beings of the brute species, their teeth must have been fitted for that purpose. But, even if so, they have been modified by hereditary transmission, and suited to the food on which we now exist; nor are even the barbarians, who adopt the turbulent and ferocious institutions of Glek-Nas, devourers of flesh like beasts of prey.

"In the course of this dispute it was proposed to dissect you; but Taë begged you off, and the Tur being, by office, averse to all novel experiments at variance with our custom of sparing life, except where it is clearly proved to be for the good of the community to take it, sent to me, whose business it is, as the richest man of the state, to afford hospitality to strangers from a distance. It was at my option to decide whether or not you were a stranger whom I could safely admit. Had I declined to receive you, you would have been handed over to the College of Sages, and what might there have befallen you I do not like to conjecture. Apart from this danger, you might chance to encounter some child of four years old, just put in possession of his vril staff; and who, in alarm at your strange appearance, and in the impulse of the moment, might reduce you to a cinder. Taë himself was about to do so when he first saw you, had his father not checked his hand. Therefore I say you cannot travel alone, but with Zee you would be safe; and I have no doubt that she would accompany you on a tour round the neighboring communities of Vril-ya (to the savage states, No !): I will ask her."

Now, as my main object in proposing to

* I never had observed it; and, if I had, am not physiologist enough to have distinguished the difference.

travel was to escape from Zee, I hastily exclaimed, "Nay, pray do not! I relinquish my design. You have said enough as to its dangers to deter me from it; and I can scarcely think it right that a young Gy of the personal attractions of your lovely daughter should travel into other regions without a better protector than a Tish of my insignificant strength and stature."

Aph-Lin emitted the soft sibilant sound which is the nearest approach to laughter that a full-grown An permits to himself ere he replied:—"Pardon my discourteous but momentary indulgence of mirth at any observation seriously made by my guest. I could not but be amused at the idea of Zee, who is so fond of protecting others that children call her 'THE GUARDIAN,' needing a protector herself against any dangers arising from the audacious admiration of males. Know that our Gy-ei, while unmarried, are accustomed to travel alone among other tribes, to see if they find there some An who may please them more than the Ana they find at home. Zee has already made three such journeys, but hitherto her heart has been untouched."

Here the opportunity which I sought was afforded to me; and I said, looking down, and with faltering voice, "Will you, my kind host, promise to pardon me, if what I am about to say gives you offence?"

"Say only the truth, and I cannot be offended; or, could I be so, it would be not for me, but for you to pardon."

"Well, then, assist me to quit you, and, much as I should have liked to witness more of the wonders, and enjoy more of the felicity, which belong to your people, let me return to my own."

"I fear there are reasons why I cannot do that; at all events, not without permission of the Tur, and he, probably, would not grant it. You are not destitute of intelligence; you may (though I do not think so) have concealed the degree of destructive powers possessed by your people; you might, in short, bring upon us some danger; and if the Tur entertains that idea, it would clearly be his duty either to put an end to you, or enclose you in a cage for the rest of your existence. But why should you wish to leave a state of society which you so politely allow to be more felicitous than your own?"

"Oh, Aph-Lin! my answer is plain. Lest in aught, and unwittingly, I should betray your hospitality; lest, in that caprice of will which in our world is proverbial among the other sex, and from which even a Gy is not free, your adorable daughter should deign to regard me, though a Tish, as if I were a civilized An, and—and—and——"

"Court you as her spouse," put in Aph-Lin gravely, and without any visible sign of surprise or displeasure.

"You have said it."

"That would be a misfortune," resumed my host, after a pause, "and I feel that you have acted as you ought in warning me. It is, as you imply, not uncommon for an unwedded Gy to conceive tastes as to the object she covets which appear whimsical to others; but there is no power to compel a young Gy to any course opposed to that which she chooses to pursue. All we can do is to reason with her, and experience tells us that the whole College of Sages would find it vain to reason with a Gy in a matter that concerns her choice in love. I grieve for you, because such a marriage would be against the Aglauran, or good of the community, for the children of such a marriage would adulterate the race: they might even come into the world with the teeth of carnivorous animals; this could not be allowed: Zee, as a Gy, cannot be controlled; but you, as a Tish, can be destroyed. I advise you, then, to resist her addresses; to tell her plainly that you can never return her love. This happens constantly. Many an An, however ardently wooed by one Gy, rejects her, and puts an end to her persecution by wedding another. The same course is open to you."

"No; for I cannot wed another Gy without equally injuring the community, and exposing it to the chance of rearing carnivorous children."

"That is true. All I can say, and I say it with the tenderness due to a Tish, and the respect due to a guest, is frankly this—if you yield, you will become a cinder. I must leave it to you to take the best way you can to defend yourself. Perhaps you had better tell Zee that she is ugly. That assurance on the lips of him she woos generally suffices to chill the most ardent Gy. Here we are at my country-house."

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CHAPTER XXIII.

I CONFESS that my conversation with Aph-Lin and the extreme coolness with which he stated his inability to control the dangerous caprice of his daughter, and treated the idea of the reduction into a cinder to which her amorous flame might expose my too seductive person, took away the pleasure I should otherwise have had in the contemplation of my host's country-seat, and the astonishing perfection of the machinery by which his farming operations were conducted. The house differed in appearance from the massive and sombre building which Aph-Lin inhabited in the city, and which seemed akin to the rocks out of which the city itself has been hewn into shape. The walls of the country-seat were composed by trees placed a few feet apart from each other, the interstices being filled in with the transparent metallic substance which serves the purpose of glass among the Ana. These trees were all in flower, and the effect was very pleasing, if not in the best taste. We were received at the porch by life-like automata, who conducted us into a chamber, the like to which I never saw before, but have often on summer days dreamingly imagined. It was a bower—half room, half garden. The walls were one mass of climbing flowers. The open spaces, which we call windows, and in which, here, the metallic surfaces were slided back, commanded various views; some, of the wide landscape with its lakes and rocks; some, of small limited expanse answering to our conservatories, filled with tiers of flowers. Along the sides of the room were flower-beds, interspersed with cushions for repose. In the centre of the floor were a cistern and a fountain of that liquid light which I have presumed to be naphtha. It was luminous and of a roseate hue; it sufficed without lamps to light up the room with a subdued radiance. All around the fountain was carpeted with a soft deep lichen, not green (I have never seen that color in the vegetation of this country), but a quiet brown, on which the eye reposes with the same sense of relief as that with which in the upper world it reposes on green. In the outlets upon flowers (which I have compared to our conservatories) there were singing-birds innumerable, which, while we remained in the room, sang in those harmonies of tune to which they are, in these parts, so wonderfully trained. The roof was open. The whole scene had charms for every sense—music from the birds, fragrance from the flowers, and varied beauty to the eye at every aspect. About all was a voluptuous repose. What a place, methought, for a honeymoon, if a Gy bride were a little less formidably armed not only with the rights of woman, but with the powers of man! but when one thinks of a Gy, so learned, so tall, so stately, so much above the standard of the creature we call woman as was Zee, no! even if I had felt no fear of being reduced to a cinder, it is not of her I should have dreamed in that bower so constructed for dreams of poetic love.

The automata reappeared, serving one of those delicious liquids which form the innocent wines of the Vril-ya.

"Truly," said I, "this is a charming residence, and I can scarcely conceive why you do not settle yourself here instead of amid the gloomier abodes of the city."

"As responsible to the community for the administration of light, I am compelled to reside chiefly in the city, and can only come hither for short intervals."

"But since I understand from you that no honors are attached to your office, and it involves some trouble, why do you accept it?"

"Each of us obeys without question the command of the Tur. He said, 'Be it requested that Aph-Lin shall be Commissioner of Light,' so I had no choice; but having held the office now for a long time, the cares, which were at first unwelcome, have become, if not pleasing, at least endurable. We are all formed by custom—even the difference of our race from the savage is but the transmitted continuance of custom, which becomes, through hereditary descent, part and parcel of our nature. You see there are Ana who even reconcile themselves to the responsibilities of chief magistrate, but no one would do so if his duties had not been rendered so light, or if there were any questions as to compliance with his requests."

"Not even if you thought the requests unwise or unjust?"

"We do not allow ourselves to think so, and indeed, everything goes on as if each and all governed themselves according to immemorial custom."

"When the chief magistrate dies or retires, how do you provide for his successor?"

"The An who has discharged the duties of chief magistrate for many years is the best person to choose one by whom those duties may be understood, and he generally names his successor."

"His son, perhaps?"

"Seldom that; for it is not an office any one desires or seeks, and a father naturally hesitates to constrain his son. But if the Tur himself decline to make a choice, for fear it might be supposed that he owed some grudge to the person on whom his choice would settle, then there are three of the College of Sages who draw lots among themselves which shall have the power to elect the chief. We consider that the judgment of one An of ordinary capacity is better than the judgment of three or more, however wise they may be; for among three there would probably be disputes; and where there are disputes, passion clouds judgment. The worst choice made by one who has no motive in choosing wrong, is better than the best choice made by many who have many motives for not choosing right."

"You reverse in your policy the maxims adopted in my country."

"Are you all, in your country, satisfied with your governors?"

"All! certainly not; the governors that most please some are sure to be those most displeasing to others."

"Then our system is better than yours."

"For you it may be; but according to our system a Tish could not be reduced to a cinder if a female compelled him to marry her; and as a Tish I sigh to return to my native world."

"Take courage, my dear little guest; Zee can't compel you to marry her. She can only entice you to do so. Don't be enticed. Come and look round my domain."

We went forth into a close, bordered with sheds; for though the Ana keep no stock for food there are some animals which they rear for milking and others for shearing. The former have no resemblance to our cows, nor the latter to our sheep, nor do I believe such species exist amongst them. They use the milk of three varieties of animal: one resembles the antelope, but is much larger, being as tall as a camel; the other two are smaller, and, though differing somewhat from each other, resemble no creature I ever saw on earth. They are very sleek and of rounded proportions: their color that of the dappled deer, with very mild countenances and beautiful dark eyes. The milk of these three creatures differs in richness and in taste. It is usually diluted with water, and flavored with the juice of a peculiar and perfumed fruit, and in itself is very nutritious and palatable. The animal whose fleece serves them for clothing and many other purposes, is more like the Italian she-goat than any other creature, but is considerably larger, has no horns, and is free from the displeasing odor of our goats. Its fleece is not thick, but very long and fine; it varies in color, but is never white, more generally of a slate-like or lavender hue. For clothing it is usually worn dyed to suit the taste of the wearer. These animals were exceedingly tame, and were treated with extraordinary care and affection by the children (chiefly female) who tended them.

We then went through vast storehouses filled with grains and fruits. I may here observe that the main staple of food among these people consists—firstly, of a kind of corn much larger in ear than our wheat, and which by culture is perpetually being brought into new varieties of flavor; and, secondly, of a fruit of about the size of a small orange, which, when gathered, is hard and bitter. It is stowed away for many months in their warehouses, and then becomes succulent and tender. Its juice, which is of dark-red color, enters into most of their sauces. They have many kinds of fruit of the nature of the olive, from which delicious oils are extracted. They have a plant somewhat resembling the sugar-cane, but its juices are less sweet and of a delicate perfume. They have no bees nor honey-kneading insects, but they make much use of a sweet gum that oozes from a coniferous plant, not unlike the araucaria. Their soil teems also with esculent roots and vegetables, which it is the aim of their culture to improve and vary to the utmost. And I never remember any meal among this people, however it might be confined to the family household, in which some delicate novelty in such articles of food was not introduced. In fine, as I before observed, their cookery is exquisite, so diversified and nutritious that one does not miss animal food; and their own

physical forms suffice to show that with them, at least, meat is not required for superior production of muscular fibre. They have no grapes—the drinks extracted from their fruits are innocent and refreshing. Their staple beverage, however, is water, in the choice of which they are very fastidious, distinguishing at once the slightest impurity.

"My younger son takes great pleasure in augmenting our produce," said Aph-Lin as we passed through the storehouses, "and therefore will inherit these lands, which constitute the chief part of my wealth. To my elder son such inheritance would be a great trouble and affliction."

"Are there many sons among you who think the inheritance of vast wealth would be a great trouble and affliction?"

"Certainly; there are indeed very few of the Vril-ya who do not consider that a fortune much above the average is a heavy burden. We are rather a lazy people after the age of childhood, and do not like undergoing more cares than we can help, and great wealth does give its owner many cares. For instance, it marks us out for public offices, which none of us like and none of us can refuse. It necessitates our taking a continued interest in the affairs of any of our poorer countrymen, so that we may anticipate their wants and see that none fall into poverty. There is an old proverb amongst us which says, 'The poor man's need is the rich man's shame ——'"

"Pardon me if I interrupt you for a moment. You then allow that some, even of the Vril-ya, know want, and need relief?"

"If by want you mean the destitution that prevails in a Koom-Posh, *that* is impossible with us, unless an An has, by some extraordinary process, got rid of all his means, cannot or will not emigrate, and has either tired out the affectionate aid of his relations or personal friends, or refuses to accept it."

"Well, then, does he not supply the place of an infant or automaton, and become a laborer —a servant?"

"No; then we regard him as an unfortunate person of unsound reason, and place him, at the expense of the State, in a public building, where every comfort and every luxury that can mitigate his affliction are lavished upon him. But an An does not like to be considered out of his mind, and therefore such cases occur so seldom that the public building I speak of is now a deserted ruin, and the last inmate of it was an An whom I recollect to have seen in my childhood. He did not seem conscious of loss of reason, and wrote glaubs (poetry). When I spoke of wants, I meant such wants as an An with desires larger than his means sometimes entertains—for expensive singing-birds, or bigger houses, or country-gardens; and the obvious way to satisfy such wants is to buy of him something that he sells. Hence Ana like myself, who are very rich, are obliged to buy a great many things they do not require, and live on a very large scale where they might prefer to live on a small one. For instance, the great size of my house in the town is a source of much trouble to my wife, and even to myself; but I am compelled to have it thus incommodiously large, because, as the richest An of the community, I am appointed to entertain the strangers from the other communities when they visit us, which they do in great crowds twice a-year, when certain periodical entertainments are held, and when relations scattered throughout all the realms of the Vril-ya joyfully reunite for a time. This hospitality, on a scale so extensive, is not to my taste, and therefore I should have been happier had I been less rich. But we must all bear the lot assigned to us in this short passage through time that we call life. After all, what are a hundred years, more or less, to the ages through which we must pass hereafter? Luckily, I have one son who likes great wealth. It is a rare exception to the general rule, and I own I cannot myself understand it."

After this conversation I sought to return to the subject which continued to weigh on my heart—viz., the chances of escape from Zee. But my host politely declined to renew that topic, and summoned our air-boat. On our way back we were met by Zee, who, having found us gone, on her return from the College of Sages, had unfurled her wings and flown in search of us.

Her grand, but to me unalluring, countenance brightened as she beheld me, and poising herself beside the boat on her large outspread plumes, she said reproachfully to Aph-Lin—"Oh, father, was it right in you to hazard the life of your guest in a vehicle to which he is so unaccustomed? He might,

by an incautious movement, fall over the side; and, alas! he is not like us, he has no wings. It were death to him to fall. Dear one!" (she added, accosting my shrinking self in a softer voice), "have you no thought of me, that you should thus hazard a life which has become almost a part of mine? Never again be thus rash, unless I am thy companion. What terror thou hast stricken into me!"

I glanced furtively at Aph-Lin, expecting, at least, that he would indignantly reprove his daughter for expressions of anxiety and affection, which, under all the circumstances, would, in the world above ground, be considered immodest in the lips of a young female, addressed to a male not affianced to her, even if of the same rank as herself.

But so confirmed are the rights of females in that region, and so absolutely foremost among those rights do females claim the privilege of courtship, that Aph-Lin would no more have thought of reproving his virgin daughter, than he would have thought of disobeying the Tur. In that country, custom, as he implied, is all and all.

He answered mildly, "Zee, the Tish was in no danger, and it is my belief that he can take very good care of himself."

"I would rather that he let me charge myself with his care. Oh, heart of my heart, it was in the thought of thy danger that I first felt how much I loved thee."

Never did man feel in so false a position as I did. These words were spoken loud in the hearing of Zee's father—in the hearing of the child who steered. I blushed with shame for them, and for her, and could not help replying, angrily: "Zee, either you mock me, which, as your father's guest, misbecomes you, or the words you utter are improper for a maiden Gy to address even to an An of her own race, if he has not wooed her with the consent of her parents. How much more improper to address them to a Tish, who has never presumed to solicit your affections, and who can never regard you with other sentiments than those of reverence and awe!"

Aph-Lin made me a covert sign of approbation, but said nothing.

"Be not so cruel!" exclaimed Zee, still in sonorous accents. "Can love command itself where it is truly felt? Do you suppose that a maiden Gy will conceal a sentiment that it elevates her to feel? What a country you must have come from!"

Here Aph-Lin gently interposed, saying, "Among the Tish-a the rights of your sex do not appear to be established, and at all events my guest may converse with you more freely if unchecked by the presence of others."

To this remark Zee made no reply, but darting on me a tender reproachful glance, agitated her wings and fled homeward.

"I had counted, at least, on some aid from my host," said I, bitterly, "in the perils to which his own daughter exposes me."

"I gave you the best aid I could. To contradict a Gy in her love affairs is to confirm her purpose. She allows no counsel to come between her and her affections.

CHAPTER XXIV.

On alighting from the air-boat, a child accosted Aph-Lin in the hall with a request that he would be present at the funeral obsequies of a relation who had recently departed from that nether world.

Now, I had never seen a burial-place or cemetery amongst this people, and, glad to seize even so melancholy an occasion to defer an encounter with Zee, I asked Aph-Lin if I might be permitted to witness with him the interment of his relation; unless, indeed, it were regarded as one of those sacred ceremonies to which a stranger to their race might not be admitted.

"The departure of an An to a happier world," answered my host, "when, as in the case of my kinsman, he has lived so long in this as to have lost pleasure in it, is rather a cheerful though quiet festival than a sacred ceremoney, and you may accompany me if you will."

Preceded by the child-messenger, we walked up the main street to a house at some little distance, and, entering the hall, were conducted to a room on the ground-floor, where we found several persons assembled round a couch on which was laid the deceased. It was an old man who had, as I was told, lived beyond his 130th year. To judge by the calm smile on his countenance, he had passed away without suffering. One of the sons, who was now the head

of the family, and who seemed in vigorous middle life, though he was considerably more than seventy, stepped forward with a cheerful face and told Aph-Lin "that the day before he died his father had seen in a dream his departed Gy, and was eager to be reunited to her, and restored to youth beneath the nearer smile of the All-Good."

While these two were talking, my attention was drawn to a dark metallic substance at the farther end of the room. It was about twenty feet in length, narrow in proportion, and all closed round, save, near the roof, there were small round holes through which might be seen a red light. From the interior emanated a rich and sweet perfume; and while I was conjecturing what purpose this machine was to serve, all the time-pieces in the town struck the hour with their solemn musical chime; and as that sound ceased, music of a more joyous character, but still of a joy subdued and tranquil, rang throughout the chamber, and from the walls beyond, in a choral peal. Symphonious with the melody those present lifted their voice in chant. The words of this hymn were simple. They expressed no regret, no farewell, but rather a greeting to the new world whither the deceased had preceded the living. Indeed, in their language, the funeral hymn is called the 'Birth Song.' Then the corpse, covered by a long cerement, was tenderly lifted up by six of the nearest kinsfolk and borne towards the dark thing I have described. I pressed forward to see what happened. A sliding door or panel at one end was lifted up —the body deposited within, on a shelf—the door reclosed—a spring at the side touched—a sudden *whishing*, sighing sound heard from within; and lo! at the other end of the machine the lid fell down, and a small handful of smouldering dust dropped into a *patera* placed to receive it. The son took up the *patera* and said (in what I understood afterwards was the usual form of words), "Behold how great is the Maker! To this little dust He gave form and life and soul. It needs not this little dust for Him to renew form and life and soul to the beloved one we shall soon see again."

Each present bowed his head and pressed his hand to his heart. Then a young female child opened a small door within the wall, and I perceived, in the recess, shelves on which were placed many *pateræ* like that which the son held, save that they all had covers. With such a cover, a Gy now approached the son, and placed it over the cup, on which it closed with a spring. On the lid were engraven the name of the deceased, and these words:— "Lent to us" (here the date of birth), "Recalled from us" (here the date of death).

The closed door shut with a musical sound, and all was over.

CHAPTER XXV.

"And this," said I, with my mind full of what I had witnessed—"this, I presume, is your usual form of burial?"

"Our invariable form," answered Aph-Lin. "What is it amongst your people?"

"We inter the body whole within the earth."

"What! to degrade the form you have loved and honored, the wife on whose breast you have slept, to the loathsomeness of corruption?"

"But if the soul lives again, can it matter whether the body waste within the earth or is reduced by that awful mechanism, worked, no doubt, by the agency of vril, into a pinch of dust?"

"You answer well," said my host, "and there is no arguing on a matter of feeling; but to me your custom is horrible and repulsive, and would serve to invest death with gloomy and hideous associations. It is something, too, to my mind, to be able to preserve the token of what has been our kinsman or friend within the abode in which we live. We thus feel more sensibly that he still lives, though not visibly so to us. But our sentiments in this, as in all things, are created by custom. Custom is not to be changed by a wise An, any more than it is changed by a wise Community, without the gravest deliberation, followed by the most earnest conviction. It is only thus that change ceases to be changeability, and once made is made for good."

When we regained the house, Aph-Lin summoned some of the children in his service, and sent them round to several of his friends, requesting their attendance that day, during the Easy Hours, to a festival in honor of his kinsman's recall to the All-Good. This was the largest and gayest assembly I ever witnessed

during my stay among the Ana, and was prolonged far into the Silent Hours.

The banquet was spread in a vast chamber reserved especially for grand occasions. This differed from our entertainments, and was not without a certain resemblance to those we read of in the luxurious age of the Roman empire. There was not one great table set out, but numerous small tables, each appropriated to eight guests. It is considered that beyond that number conversation languishes and friendship cools. The Ana never laugh loud, as I have before observed, but the cheerful ring of their voices at the various tables betokened gaiety of intercourse. As they have no stimulant drinks, and are temperate in food, though so choice and dainty, the banquet itself did not last long. The tables sank through the floor, and then came musical entertainments for those who liked them. Many, however, wandered away: —some of the younger ascended on their wings, for the hall was roofless, forming aerial dances; others strolled through the various apartments, examining the curiosities with which they were stored, or formed themselves into groups for various games, the favorite of which is a complicated kind of chess played by eight persons. I mixed with the crowd, but was prevented joining in their conversation by the constant companionship of one or the other of my host's sons, appointed to keep me from obtrusive questionings. The guests, however, noticed me but slightly; they had grown accustomed to my appearance, seeing me so often in the streets, and I had ceased to excite much curiosity.

To my great delight Zee avoided me, and evidently sought to excite my jealousy by marked attentions to a very handsome young An, who (though, as is the modest custom of the males when addressed by females, he answered with downcast eyes and blushing cheeks, and was demure and shy as young ladies new to the world are in most civilized countries, except England and America) was evidently much charmed by the tall Gy, and ready to falter a bashful "Yes" if she had actually proposed. Fervently hoping that she would, and more and more averse to the idea of reduction to a cinder after I had seen the rapidity with which a human body can be hurried into a pinch of dust, I amused myself by watching the manners of the other young people. I had the satisfaction of observing that Zee was no singular assertor of a female's most valued rights. Wherever I turned my eyes, or lent my ears, it seemed to me that the Gy was the wooing party, and the An the coy and reluctant one. The pretty innocent airs which an An gave himself on being thus courted, the dexterity with which he evaded direct answer to professions of attachment, or turned into jest the flattering compliments addressed to him, would have done honor to the most accomplished coquette. Both my male *chaperons* were subjected greatly to these seductive influences, and both acquitted themselves with wonderful honor to their tact and self-control.

I said to the elder son, who preferred mechanical employments to the management of a great property, and who was of an eminently philosophical temperament,—"I find it difficult to conceive how at your age, and with all the intoxicating effects on the senses of music and lights and perfumes, you can be so cold to that impassioned Gy who has just left you with tears in her eyes at your cruelty."

The young An replied with a sigh, "Gentle Tish, the greatest misfortune in life is to marry one Gy if you are in love with another."

"Oh! you are in love with another?"

"Alas! yes."

"And she does not return your love?"

"I don't know. Sometimes a look, a t[illegible] makes me hope so; but she has never pla[illegible] told me that she loves me."

"Have you not whispered in her own ear that you love her?"

"Fie! what are you thinking of? W[illegible] world do you come from? Could I so be[illegible] the dignity of my sex? Could I be so un-[illegible] —so lost to shame, as to own love to a Gy [illegible] has not first owned hers to me?"

"Pardon: I was not quite aware that [illegible] pushed the modesty of your sex so far. [illegible] it does no An ever say to a Gy, 'I love you,' till she says it first to him?"

"I can't say that no An has ever done so; but if he ever does, he is disgraced in the eyes of the Ana, and secretly despised by the Gy-ei. No Gy, well brought up, would listen to him; she would consider that he audaciously infringed on the rights of her sex, while outraging the modesty which dignifies his own. It is very provoking," continued the An; "for she whom I love has certainly courted no one

else, and I cannot but think she likes me. Sometimes I suspect that she does not court me because she fears I would ask some unreasonable settlement as to the surrender of her rights. But if so, she cannot really love me; for where a Gy really loves, she foregoes all rights."

"Is this young Gy present?"

"Oh yes. She sits yonder talking to my mother."

I looked in the direction to which my eyes were thus guided, and saw a Gy dressed in robes of bright red, which among this people is a sign that a Gy as yet prefers a single state. She wears grey, a neutral tint, to indicate that she is looking about for a spouse; dark purple if she wishes to intimate that she has made a choice; purple and orange when she is betrothed or married; light blue when she is divorced or a widow and would marry again. Light blue is of course seldom seen.

Among a people where all are of so high a type of beauty, it is difficult to single out one as peculiarly handsome. My young friend's choice seemed to me to possess the average of good looks; but there was an expression in her face that pleased me more than did the faces of the young Gy-ei generally, because it looked less bold—less conscious of female rights. I observed that, while she talked to Bra, she glanced, from time to time, sidelong at my young friend.

"Courage," said I; "that young Gy loves you."

"Ay, but if she will not say so, how am I the better for her love?"

"Your mother is aware of your attachment?"

"Perhaps so. I never owned it to her. It would be un-Anly to confide such weakness to mother. I have told my father; he may have told it again to his wife."

"Will you permit me to quit you for a moment, and glide behind your mother and your beloved? I am sure they are talking about you. Do not hesitate. I promise that I will not allow myself to be questioned till I rejoin you."

The young An pressed his hand on his heart, touched me lightly on the head, and allowed me to quit his side. I stole unobserved behind his mother and his beloved. I overheard their talk.

Bra was speaking; said she, "There can be no doubt of this: either my son, who is of marriageable age, will be decoyed into marriage with one of his many suitors, or he will join those who emigrate to a distance and we shall see him no more. If you really care for him, my dear Lo, you should propose."

"I do care for him, Bra; but I doubt if I could really ever win his affections. He is fond of his inventions and timepieces; and I am not like Zee, but so dull that I fear I could not enter into his favorite pursuits, and then he would get tired of me, and at the end of three years divorce me, and I could never marry another—never."

"It is not necessary to know about timepieces to know how to be so necessary to the happiness of an An who cares for timepieces, that he would rather give up the timepieces than divorce his Gy. You see, my dear Lo," continued Bra, "that precisely because we are the stronger sex, we rule the other, provided we never show our strength. If you were superior to my son in making timepieces and automata, you should, as his wife, always let him suppose you thought him superior in that art to yourself. The An tactily allows the preeminence of the Gy in all except his own special pursuit. But if she either excels him in that, or affects not to admire him for his proficiency in it, he will not love her very long; perhaps he may even divorce her. But where a Gy really loves, she soon learns to love all that the An does."

The young Gy made no answer to this address. She looked down musingly, then a smile crept over her lips, and she rose, still silent, and went through the crowd till she paused by the young An who loved her. I followed her steps, but discreetly stood at a little distance while I watched them. Somewhat to my surprise, till I recollected the coy tactics among the Ana, the lover seemed to receive her advances with an air of indifference. He even moved away, but she pursued his steps, and, a little time after, both spread their wings and vanished amid the luminous space above.

Just then I was accosted by the chief magistrate, who mingled with the crowd distinguished by no signs of deference or homage. It so happened that I had not seen this great dignitary since the day I had entered his domin-

ions, and recalling Aph-Lin's words as to his terrible doubt whether or not I should be dissected, a shudder crept over me at the sight of his tranquil countenance.

"I hear much of you, stranger, from my son Taë," said the Tur, laying his hand politely on my bended head. "He is very fond of your society, and I trust you are not displeased with the customs of our people."

I muttered some unintelligible answer, which I intended to be an assurance of my gratitude for the kindness I had received from the Tur, and my admiration of his countrymen, but the dissecting-knife gleamed before my mind's eye and choked my utterance. A softer voice said, "My brother's friend must be dear to me." And looking up I saw a young Gy, who might be sixteen years old, standing beside the magistrate and gazing at me with a very benignant countenance. She had not come to her full growth, and was scarcely taller than myself (viz., about 5 feet 10 inches), and, thanks to that comparatively diminutive stature, I thought her the loveliest Gy I had hitherto seen. I suppose something in my eyes revealed that impression, for her countenance grew yet more benignant.

"Taë tells me," she said, "that you have not yet learned to accustom yourself to wings. That grieves me, for I should have liked to fly with you."

"Alas!" I replied, "I can never hope to enjoy that happiness. I am assured by Zee that the safe use of wings is a hereditary gift, and it would take generations before one of my race could poise himself in the air like a bird."

"Let not that thought vex you too much," replied this amiable Princess, "for, after all, there must come a day when Zee and myself must resign our wings for ever. Perhaps when that day comes we might be glad if the An we chose was also without wings."

The Tur had left us, and was lost amongst the crowd. I began to feel at ease with Taë's charming sister, and rather startled her by the boldness of my compliment in replying "that no An she could choose would ever use his wings to fly away from her." It is so against custom for an An to say such civil things to a Gy till she has declared her passion for him, and been accepted as his betrothed, that the young maiden stood quiet dumbfounded for a few moments. Nevertheless she did not seem displeased. At last recovering herself, she invited me to accompany her into one of the less crowded rooms and listen to the songs of the birds. I followed her steps as she glided before me, and she led me into a chamber almost deserted. A fountain of naphtha was playing in the centre of the room; round it were ranged soft divans, and the walls of the room were open on one side to an aviary in which the birds were chanting their artful chorus. The Gy seated herself on one of the divans, and I placed myself at her side. "Taë tells me," she said, "that Aph-Lin has made it the law * of his house that you are not to be questioned as to the country you come from or the reason why you visit us. Is it so?"

"It is."

"May I, at least, wlthout sinning against that law, ask at least if the Gy-ei in your country are of the same pale color as yourself, and no taller?"

"I do not think, O beautiful Gy, that I infringe the law of Aph-Lin, which is more binding on myself than any one, if I answer questions so innocent. The Gy-ei in my country are much fairer of hue than I am, and their average height is at least a head shorter than mine."

"They cannot then be so strong as the Ana amongst you? But I suppose their superior vril force makes up for such extraordinary disadvantage of size?"

"They do not possess the vril force as you know it. But still they are very powerful in my country, and an An has small chance of a happy life if he be not more or less governed by his Gy."

"You speak feelingly," said Taë's sister, in a tone of voice half sad, half petulant. "You are married, of course?"

"No—certainly not."

"Nor betrothed?"

"Nor betrothed."

"Is it possible that no Gy has proposed to you?"

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* Literally "has said, In this house be it requested." Words synonymous with law, as implying forcible obligation, are avoided by this singular people. Even had it been decreed by the Tur that his College of Sages should dissect me, the decree would have ran blandly thus,—"Be it requested that, for the good of the community, the carnivorous Tish be requested to submit himself to dissection."

"In my country the Gy does not propose; the An speaks first."

"What a strange reversal of the laws of nature!" said the maiden, "and what want of modesty in your sex! But have you never proposed, never loved one Gy more than another?"

I felt embarrassed by these ingenuous questionings, and said, "Pardon me, but I think we are beginning to infringe upon Aph-Lin's injunction. Thus much only will I say in answer, and then, I implore you, ask no more. I did once feel the preference you speak of; I did propose, and the Gy would willingly have accepted me, but her parents refused their consent."

"Parents! Do you mean seriously to tell me that parents can interfere with the choice of their daughters?"

"Indeed they can, and do very often."

"I should not like to live in that country," said the Gy, simply; "but I hope you will never go back to it."

I bowed my head in silence. The Gy gently raised my face with her right hand, and looked into it tenderly. "Stay with us," she said; "stay with us, and be loved."

What I might have answered, what dangers of becoming a cinder I might have encountered, I still tremble to think, when the light of the naphtha fountain was obscured by the shadow of wings; and Zee, flying through the open roof, alighted beside us. She said not a word, but, taking my arm with her mighty hand, she drew me away, as a mother draws a naughty child, and led me through the apartments to one of the corridors, on which, by the mechanism they generally prefer to stairs, we ascended to my own room. This gained, Zee breathed on my forehead, touched my breast with her staff, and I was instantly plunged into a profound sleep.

When I awoke some hours later, and heard the song of the birds in the adjoining aviary, the remembrance of Taë's sister, her gentle looks and caressing words, vividly returned to me; and so impossible is it for one born and reared in our upper world's state of society to divest himself of ideas dictated by vanity and ambition, that I found myself instinctively building proud castles in the air.

"Tish though I be," thus ran my meditations—"Tish though I be, it is then clear that Zee is not the only Gy whom my appearance can captivate. Evidently I am loved by a PRINCESS, the first maiden of this land, the daughter of the absolute Monarch whose autocracy they so idly seek to disguise by the republican title of chief magistrate. But for the sudden swoop of that horrible Zee, this Royal Lady would have formally proposed to me; and though it may be very well for Aph-Lin, who is only a subordinate minister, a mere Commissioner of Light, to threaten me with destruction if I accept his daughter's hand, yet a Sovereign, whose word is law, could compel the community to abrogate any custom that forbids intermarriage with one of a strange race, and which in itself is a contradiction to their boasted equality of ranks.

"It is not to be supposed that his daughter, who spoke with such incredulous scorn of the interference of parents, would not have sufficient influence with her Royal Father to save me from the combustion to which Aph-Lin would condemn my form. And if I were exalted by such an alliance, who knows but what the Monarch might elect me as his successor. Why not? Few among this indolent race of philosophers like the burden of such greatness. All might be pleased to see the supreme power lodged in the hands of an accomplished stranger who has experience of other and livelier forms of existence; and, once chosen, what reforms I would institute! What additions to the really pleasant but too monotonous life of this realm my familiarity with the civilized nations above ground would effect! I am fond of the sports of the field. Next to war, is not the chase a king's pastime? In what varieties of strange game does this nether world abound! How interesting to strike down creatures that were known above ground before the Deluge! But how? By that terrible vril, in which, from want of hereditary transmission, I could never be a proficient? No, but by a civilized handy breech-loader, which these ingenious mechanicians could not only make, but no doubt improve; nay, surely I saw one in the Museum. Indeed, as absolute king, I should discountenance vril altogether, except in cases of war.

"*Apropos* of war, it is perfectly absurd to stint a people so intelligent, as rich, so well armed, to a petty limit of territory sufficing for 10,000 or 12,000 families. Is not this restriction a mere philosophical crotchet, at va-

riance with the aspiring element in human nature, such as has been partially, and with complete failure, tried in the upper world by the late Mr. Robert Owen. Of course one would not go to war with neighboring nations as well armed as one's own subjects; but then, what of those regions inhabited by races unacquainted with vril, and apparently resembling, in their democratic institutions, my American countrymen? One might invade them without offence to the vril nations, our allies, appropriate their territories, extending, perhaps, to the most distant regions of the nether earth, and thus rule over an empire in which the sun never sets. (I forgot, in my enthusiasm, that over those regions there was no sun to set.) As for the fantastical notion against conceding fame or renown to an eminent individual, because, forsooth, bestowal of honors insures contest in the pursuit of them, stimulates angry passions, and mars the felicity of peace—it is opposed to the very elements, not only of the human but the brute creation, which are all, if tamable, participators in the sentiment of praise and emulation. What renown would be given to a king who thus extended his empire! I should be deemed a demigod."

Thinking of that, the other fanatical notion of regulating this life by reference to one which, no doubt, we Christians firmly believe in, but never take into consideration, I resolved that enlightened philosophy compelled me to abolish a heathen religion so superstitiously at variance with modern thought and practical action. Musing over these various projects, I felt how much I should have liked at that moment to brighten my wits by a good glass of whisky-and-water. Not that I am habitually a spirit-drinker, but certainly there are times, when a little stimulant of alcoholic nature, taken with a cigar, enlivens the imagination. Yes; certainly among these herbs and fruits there would be a liquid from which one could extract a pleasant vinous alcohol; and with a steak cut off one of those elks (ah! what offence to science to reject the animal food which our first medical men agree in recommending to the gastric juices of mankind!) one would certainly pass a more exhilarating hour of repast. Then, too, instead of those antiquated dramas performed by childish amateurs, certainly, when I am king, I will introduce our modern opera and a *corps de ballet*, for which one might find, among the nations I shall conquer, young females of less formidable height and thews than the Gy-ei—not armed with vril, and not insisting upon one's marrying them.

I was so completely rapt in these and similar reforms, political, social, and moral, calculated to bestow on the people of the nether world the blessings of a civilization known to the races of the upper, that I did not perceive that Zee had entered the chamber till I heard a deep sigh, and raising my eyes, beheld her standing by my couch.

I need not say that, according to the manners of this people, a Gy can, without indecorum, visit an An in his chamber, though an An would be considered forward and immodest to the last degree if he entered the chamber of a Gy without previously obtaining her permission to do so. Fortunately I was in the full habiliments I had worn when Zee had deposited me on the couch. Nevertheless I felt much irritated, as well as shocked, by her visit, and asked in a rude tone what she wanted.

"Speak gently, beloved one, I entreat you," said she, "for I am very unhappy. I have not slept since we parted."

"A due sense of your shameful conduct to me as your father's guest might well suffice to banish sleep from your eyelids. Where was the affection you pretended to have for me, where was even that politeness on which the Vril-ya pride themselves, when, taking advantage alike of that physical strength in which your sex, in this extraordinary region, excels our own, and of those detestable and unhallowed powers which the agencies of vril invest in your eyes and finger-ends, you exposed me to humiliation before you assembled visitors, before Her Royal Highness—I mean, the daughter of your own chief magistate—carrying me off to bed like a naughty infant, and plunging me into sleep, without asking my consent?"

"Ungrateful! Do you reproach me for the evidences of my love? Can you think that, even if unstung by the jealousy which attends upon love till it fades away in blissful trust when we know that the heart we have wooed is won. I could be indifferent to the perils to which the audacious overtures of that silly little child might expose you?"

"Hold! Since you introduce the subject

of perils, it perhaps does not misbecome me to say that my most imminent perils come from yourself, or at least would come if I believed in your love and accepted your addresses. Your father has told me plainly that in that case I should be consumed into a cinder with as little compunction as if I were the reptile whom Taë blasted into ashes with the flash of his wand."

"Do not let that fear chill your heart to me," exclaimed Zee, dropping on her knees and absorbing my right hand in the space of her ample palm. "It is true, indeed, that we two cannot wed as those of the same race wed; true that the love between us must be pure as that which, in our belief, exists between lovers who reunite in the new life beyond that boundary at which the old life ends. But is it not happiness enough to be together, wedded in mind and in heart? Listen: I have just left my father. He consents to our union on those terms. I have sufficient influence with the College of Sages to insure their request to the Tur not to interfere with the free choice of a Gy, provided that her wedding with one of another race be but the wedding of souls. Oh, think you that true love needs ignoble union? It is not that I yearn only to be by your side in this life, to be part and parcel of your joys and sorrows here: I ask here for a tie which will bind us for ever and for ever in the world of immortals. Do you reject me?"

As she spoke, she knelt, and the whole character of her face was changed; nothing of sternness left to its grandeur; a divine light, as that of an immortal, shining out from its human beauty. But she rather awed me as angel than moved me as woman, and after an embarrassed pause, I faltered forth evasive expressions of gratitude, and sought, as delicately as I could, to point out how humiliating would be my position amongst her race in the light of a husband who might never be permitted the name of father.

"But," said Zee, "this community does not constitute the whole world. No; nor do all the populations comprised in the league of the Vril-ya. For thy sake I will renounce my country and my people. We will fly together to some region where thou shalt be safe. I am strong enough to bear thee on my wings across the deserts that intervene. I am skilled enough to cleave open, amid the rocks, valleys in which to build our home. Solitude and a hut with thee would be to me society and the universe. Or wouldst thou return to thine own world, above the surface of this, exposed to the uncertain seasons, and lit but by the changeful orbs which constitute, by thy description, the fickle character of those savage regions? If so, speak the word, and I will force the way for thy return, so that I am thy companion there, though, there as here, but partner of thy soul, and fellow-traveller with thee to the world in which there is no parting and no death."

I could not but be deeply affected by the tenderness, at once so pure and so impassioned, with which these words were uttered, and in a voice that would have rendered musical the roughest sounds in the rudest tongue. And for a moment it did occur to me that I might avail myself of Zee's agency to effect a safe and speedy return to the upper world. But a very brief space for reflection sufficed to show me how dishonorable and base a return for such devotion it would be to allure thus away, from her own people and a home in which I had been so hospitably treated, a creature to whom our world would be so abhorrent, and for whose barren, if spiritual love, I could not reconcile myself to renounce the more human affection of mates less exalted above my erring self. With this sentiment of duty towards the Gy combined another of duty towards the whole race I belonged to. Could I venture to introduce into the upper world a being so formidably gifted—a being that with a movement of her staff could in less than an hour reduce New York and its glorious Koom-Posh into a pinch of snuff? Rob her of one staff, with her science she could easily construct another; and with the deadly lightnings that armed the slender engine her whole frame was charged. If thus dangerous to the cities and populations of the whole upper earth, could she be a safe companion to myself in case her affection should be subjected to change or embittered by jealousy? These thoughts, which it takes so many words to express, passed rapidly through my brain and decided my answer.

"Zee," I said, in the softest tones I could command, and pressing respectful lips on the hand into whose clasp mine had vanished—

"Zee, I can find no words to say how deeply I am touched, and how highly I am honored, by a love so disinterested and self-immolating. My best return to it is perfect frankness. Each nation has its customs. The customs of yours do not allow you to wed me; the customs of mine are equally opposed to such a union between those of races so widely differing. On the other hand, though not deficient in courage among my own people, or amid dangers with which I am familiar, I cannot, without a shudder of horror, think of constructing a bridal home in the heart of some dismal chaos, with all the elements of nature, fire and water and mephitic gases, at war with each other, and with the probability that at some moment, while you were busied in cleaving rocks or conveying vril into lamps, I should be devoured by a krek which your operations disturbed from its hiding-place. I, a mere Tish, do not deserve the love of a Gy, so brilliant, so learned, so potent as yourself. Yes, I do not deserve that love, for I cannot return it."

Zee released my hand, rose to her feet, and turned her face away to hide her emotions; then she glided noiselessly along the room, and paused at the threshold. Suddenly, impelled as by a new thought, she rerurned to my side and said, in a whispered tone,—

"You told me you would speak with perfect frankness. With perfect frankness, then, answer me this question. If you cannot love me, do you love another?"

"Certainly, I do not."

"You do not love Taë's sister?"

"I never saw her before last night."

"That is no answer. Love is swifter than vril. You hesitate to tell me. Do not think it is only jealousy that prompts me to caution you. If the Tur's daughter should declare love to you—if in her ignorance she confides to her father any preference that may justify his belief that she will woo you—he will have no option but to request your immediate destruction, as he is specially charged with the duty of consulting the good of the community, which could not allow a daughter of the Vril-ya to wed a son of the Tish-a, in that sense of marriage which does not confine itself to union of the souls. Alas! there would then be for you no escape. She has no strength of wing to uphold you through the air; she has no science wherewith to make a home in the wilderness. Believe that here my friendship speaks, and that my jealousy is silent."

With those words Zee left me. And recalling those words, I thought no more of succeeding to the throne of the Vril-ya, or of the political, social, and moral reforms I should institute in the capacity of Absolute Sovereign.

CHAPTER XXVI.

After the conversation with Zee just recorded, I fell into a profound melancholy. The curious interest with which I had hitherto examined the life and habits of this marvellous community was at an end. I could not banish from my mind the consciousness that I was among a people who, however kind and courteous, could destroy me at any moment without scruple or compunction. The virtuous and peaceful life of the people which, while new to me, had seemed so holy a contrast to the contentions, the passions, the vices of the upper world, now began to oppress me with a sense of dulness and monotony. Even the serene tranquillity of the lustrous air preyed on my spirits. I longed for a change, even to winter, or storm, or darkness. I began to feel that, whatever our dreams of perfectibility, our restless aspirations towards a better, and higher, and calmer sphere of being, we, the mortals of the upper world, are not trained or fitted to enjoy for long the very happiness of which we dream or to which we aspire.

Now, in this social state of the Vril-ya, it was singular to mark how it contrived to unite and to harmonize into one system nearly all the objects which the various philosophers of the upper world have placed before human hopes as the ideals of a Utopian future. It was a state in which war, with all its calamities, was deemed impossible, a state in which the freedom of all and each was secured to the uttermost degree, without one of those animosities which make freedom in the upper world depend on the perpetual strife of hostile parties. Here the corruption which debases democracies was as unknown as the discontents which undermine the thrones of monarchies. Equality here was not a name; it was a reality. Riches were not persecuted because they were not envied. Here those problems connected with the

labors of a working class, hitherto insoluble above ground, and above ground conducting to such bitterness between classes, were solved by a process the simplest, a distinct and separate working class was dispensed with altogether. Mechanical inventions, constructed on principles that baffled my research to ascertain, worked by an agency infinitely more powerful and infinitely more easy of management than aught we have yet extracted from electricity or steam, with the aid of children whose strength was never overtasked, but who loved their employment as sport and pastime, sufficed to create a Public-wealth so devoted to the general use that not a grumbler was ever heard of. The vices that rot our cities, here had no footing. Amusements abounded, but they were all innocent. No merry-makings conduced to intoxication, to riot, to disease. Love existed, and was ardent in pursuit, but its object, once secured, was faithful. The adulterer, the profligate, the harlot, were phenomena so unknown in this commonwealth, that even to find the words by which they were designated one would have had to search throughout an obsolete literature composed thousands of years before. They who have been students of theoretical philosophies above ground, know that all these strange departures from civilized life do but realize ideas which have been broached, canvassed, ridiculed, contested for; sometimes partially tried, and still put forth in fantastic books, but have never come to practical result. Nor were these all the steps towards theoretical perfectibility which this community had made. It had been the sober belief of Descartes that the life of man could be prolonged, not, indeed, on this earth, to eternal duration, but to what he called the age of the patriarchs, and modestly defined to be from 110 to 150 years average length. Well, even this dream of sages was here fulfilled—nay, more than fulfilled; for the vigor of middle life was preserved even after the term of a century was passed. With this longevity, was combined a greater blessing than itself—that of continuous health. Such diseases as befell the race were removed with ease by scientific applications of that agency—life-giving as life-destroying—which is inherent in vril. Even this idea is not unknown above ground, though it has generally been confined to enthusiasts or charlatans, and emanates from confused notions about mesmerism, odic force, etc. Passing by such trivial contrivances as wings, which every school-boy knows has been tried and found wanting, from the mythical or pre-historical period, I proceed to that very delicate question, urged of late as essential to the perfect happiness of our human species by the two most disturbing and potential influences on upper-ground society,—Womankind and Philosophy. I mean the Rights of Women.

Now, it is allowed by jurisprudists that it is idle to talk of rights where there are not corresponding powers to enforce them; and above ground, for some reason or other, man, in his physical force, in the use of weapons offensive and defensive, when it comes to positive personal contest, can, as a rule of general application, master women. But among this people there can be no doubt about the rights of women, because, as I have before said, the Gy, physically speaking, is bigger and stronger than the An; and her will being also more resolute than his, and will being essential to the direction of the vril force, she can bring to bear upon him, more potently than he on herself, the mystical agency which art can extract from the occult properties of nature. Therefore all that our female philosophers above ground contend for as to rights of women, is conceded as a matter of course in this happy commonwealth. Besides such physical powers, the Gy-ei have (at least in youth) a keen desire for accomplishments and learning which exceeds that of the male; and thus they are the scholars, the professors—the learned portion, in short, of the community.

Of course, in this state of society the female establishes, as I have shown, her most valued privilege, that of choosing and courting her wedding partner. Without that privilege she would despise all the others. Now, above ground, we should not unreasonably apprehend that a female, thus potent and thus privileged, when she had fairly hunted us down and married us, would be very imperious and tyrannical. Not so with the Gy-ei: once married, the wings once suspended, and more amiable, complacent, docile mates, more sympathetic, more sinking their loftier capacities into the study of their husbands' comparatively frivolous tastes and whims, no poet could conceive in his visions of conjugal bliss. Lastly, among the more important characteristics of

the Vril-ya, as distinguished from our mankind —lastly, and most important on the bearings of their life and the peace of their commonwealth, is their universal agreement in the existence of a merciful beneficent Deity, and of a future world to the duration of which a century or two are moments too brief to waste upon thoughts of fame and power and avarice; while with that agreement is combined another —viz., since they can know nothing as to the nature of that Deity beyond the fact of His supreme goodness, nor of that future world beyond the fact of its felicitous existence, so their reason forbids all angry disputes on insoluble questions. Thus they secure for that state in the bowels of the earth what no community ever secured under the light of the stars—all the blessings and consolations of a religion without any of the evils and calamities which are engendered by strife between one religion and another.

It would be, then, utterly impossible to deny that the state of existence among the Vril-ya is thus, as a whole, immeasurably more felicitous than that of superterrestrial races, and, realizing the dreams of our most sanguine philanthropists, almost approaches to a poet's conception of some angelical order. And yet, if you would take a thousand of the best and most philosophical of human beings you could find in London, Paris, Berlin, New York, or even Boston, and place them as citizens in this beatified community, my belief is, that in less than a year they would either die of *ennui*, or attempt some revolution by which they would militate against the good of the community, and be burnt into cinders at the request of the Tur.

Certainly I have no desire to insinuate, through the medium of this narrative, any ignorant disparagement of the race to which I belong. I have, on the contrary, endeavored to make it clear that the principles which regulate the social system of the Vril-ya forbid them to produce those individual examples of human greatness which adorn the annals of the upper world. Where there are no wars there can be no Hannibal, no Washington, no Jackson, no Sheridan;—where states are so happy that they fear no danger and desire no change, they cannot give birth to a Demosthenes, a Webster, a Sumner, a Wendel Holmes, or a Butler; and where a society attains to a moral standard, in which there are no crimes and no sorrows from which tragedy can extract its ailment of pity and sorrow, no salient vices or follies on which comedy can lavish its mirthful satire, it has lost the chance of producing a Shakspeare, or a Molière, or a Mrs. Beecher Stowe. But if I have no desire to disparage my fellow-men above ground in showing how much the motives that impel the energies and ambition of individuals in a society of contest and struggle — become dormant or annulled in a society which aims at securing for the aggregate the calm and innocent felicity which we presume to be the lot of beatified immortals; neither, on the other hand, have I the wish to represent the commonwealths of the Vril-ya as an ideal form of political society, to the attainment of which our own efforts of reform should be directed. On the contrary, it is because we have so combined, throughout the series of ages, the elements which compose human character, that it would be utterly impossible for us to adopt the modes of life, or to reconcile our passions to the modes of thought, among the Vril-ya,—that I arrived at the conviction that this people—though originally not only of our human race, but, as seems to me clear by the roots of their language, descended from the same ancestors as the great Aryan family, from which in varied streams has flowed the dominant civilization of the world; and having, according to their myths and their history, passed through phases of society familiar to ourselves,—had yet now developed into a distinct species with which it was impossible that any community in the upper world could amalgamate: And that if they ever emerged from these nether recesses into the light of day, they would, according to their own traditional persuasions of their ultimate destiny, destroy and replace our existent varieties of man.

It may, indeed, be said, since more than one Gy could be found to conceive a partiality for so ordinary a type of our superterrestrial race as myself, that even if the Vril-ya did appear above ground, we might be saved from extermination by intermixture of race. But this is too sanguine a belief. Instances of such *mesalliance* would be as rare as those of intermarriage between the Anglo-Saxon emigrants and the Red Indians. Nor would time be allowed for the operation of familiar intercourse.

The Vril-ya, on emerging, induced by the charm of a sunlit heaven to form their settlements above ground, would commence at once the work of destruction, seize upon the territories already cultivated, and clear off, without scruple, all the inhabitants who resisted that invasion. And considering their contempt for the institutions of Koom-Posh or Popular Government, and the pugnacious valor of my beloved countrymen, I believe that if the Vril-ya first appeared in free America—as, being the choicest portion of the habitable earth, they would doubtless be induced to do—and said, "This quarter of the globe we take; Citizens of a Koom-Posh, make way for the development of species in the Vril-ya," my brave compatriots would show fight, and not a soul of them would be left in this life, to rally round the Stars and Stripes, at the end of a week.

I now saw but little of Zee, save at meals, when the family assembled, and she was then reserved and silent. My apprehensions of danger from an affection I had so little encouraged or deserved, therefore, now faded away, but my dejection continued to increase. I pined for escape to the upper world, but I racked my brains in vain for any means to effect it. I was never permitted to wander forth alone, so that I could not even visit the spot on which I had alighted, and see if it were possible to re-ascend to the mine. Nor even in the Silent Hours, when the household was locked in sleep, could I have let myself down from the lofty floor in which my apartment was placed. I knew not how to command the automata who stood mockingly at my beck beside the wall, nor could I ascertain the springs by which were set in movement the platforms that supplied the place of stairs. The knowledge how to avail myself of these contrivances had been purposely withheld from me. Oh, that I could but have learned the use of wings, so freely here at the service of every infant, then I might have escaped from the casement, regained the rocks, and buoyed myself aloft through the chasm of which the perpendicular sides forbade place for human footing!

CHAPTER XXVII.

One day, as I sat alone and brooding in my chamber, Taë flew in at the open window, and alighted on the couch beside me. I was always pleased with the visits of a child, in whose society, if humbled, I was less eclipsed than in that of Ana who had completed their education and matured their understanding. And as I was permitted to wander forth with him for my companion, and as I longed to revisit the spot in which I had descended into the nether world, I hastened to ask him if he were at leisure for a stroll beyond the streets of the city. His countenance seemed to me graver than usual as he replied, "I came hither on purpose to invite you forth."

We soon found ourselves in the street, and had not gone far from the house when we encountered five or six young Gy-ei, who were returning from the fields with baskets full of flowers, and chanting a song in chorus as they walked. A young Gy sings more often than she talks. They stopped on seeing us, accosting Taë with familiar kindness, and me with the courteous gallantry which distinguishes the Gy-ei in their manner towards our weaker sex.

And here I may observe, that, though a virgin Gy is so frank in her courtship to the individual she favors, there is nothing that approaches to that general breadth and loudness of manner which those young ladies of the Anglo-Saxon race, to whom the distinguished epithet of "fast" is accorded, exhibit towards young gentlemen whom they do not profess to love. No: the bearing of the Gy-ei towards males in ordinary is very much that of high-bred men in the gallant societies of the upper world towards ladies whom they respect but do not woo; deferential, complimentary, exquisitely polished—what we should call "chivalrous."

Certainly I was a little put out by the number of civil things, addressed to my *amour propre*, which were said to me by these courteous young Gy-ei. In the world I came from, a man would have thought himself aggrieved, treated with irony, "chaffed" (if so vulgar a slang word may be allowed on the authority of the popular novelists who use it so freely), when one fair Gy complimented me on the freshness of my complexion, another on the choice of colors in my dress, a third, with a sly smile, on the conquests I had made at Aph-Lin's entertainment. But I knew already that all such language was what the French call

banal; and did but express in the female mouth, below earth, that sort of desire to pass for amiable with the opposite sex which, above earth, arbitrary custom and hereditary transmission demonstrate by the mouth of the male. And just as a high-bred young lady, above earth, habituated to such compliments, feels that she cannot, without impropriety, return them, nor evince any great satisfaction at receiving them; so I, who had learned polite manners at the house of so wealthy and dignified a Minister of that nation, could but smile, and try to look pretty, in bashfully disclaiming the compliments showered upon me. While we were thus talking, Tae's sister, it seems, had seen us from the upper rooms of the Royal Palace at the entrance of the town, and, precipitating herself on her wings, alighted in the midst of the group.

Singling me out, she said, though still with the inimitable deference of manner, which I have called "chivalrous," yet not without a certain abruptness of tone which, as addressed to the weaker sex, Sir Philip Sidney might have termed "rustic," "Why do you never come to see us?"

While I was deliberating on the right answer to give to this unlooked-for question, Taë said quickly, and sternly, "Sister, you forget—the stranger is of my sex. It is not for persons of my sex, having due regard for reputation and modesty, to lower themselves by running after the society of yours."

This speech was received with evident approval by the young Gy-ei in general; but Taë's sister looked greatly abashed. Poor thing!—and a PRINCESS too!

Just at this moment a shadow fell on the space between me and the group; and, turning round, I beheld the chief magistrate coming close upon us, with the silent and stately pace peculiar to the Vril-ya. At the sight of his countenance, the same terror which had seized me when I first beheld it returned. On that brow, in those eyes, there was that same indefinable something which marked the being of a race fatal to our own—that strange expression of serene exemption from our common cares and passions, of conscious superior power, compassionate and inflexible as that of a judge who pronounces doom. I shivered, and, inclining low, pressed the arm of my child-friend, and drew him onward silently. The Tur placed himself before our path, regarded me for a moment without speaking, then turned his eye quietly on his daughter's face, and, with a grave salutation to her and the other Gy-ei, went through the midst of the group,—still without a word.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHEN Taë and I found ourselves alone on the broad road that lay between the city and the chasm through which I had descended into this region beneath the light of the stars and sun, I said under my breath, "Child and friend, there is a look in your father's face which appals me. I feel as if, in its awful tranquillity, I gazed upon death."

Taë did not immediately reply. He seemed agitated, and as if debating with himself by what words to soften some unwelcome intelligence. At last he said, "None of the Vril-ya fear death: do you?"

"The dread of death is implanted in the breasts of the race to which I belong. We can conquer it at the call of duty, of honor, of love. We can die for a truth, for a native land, for those who are dearer to us than ourselves. But if death do really threaten me now and here, where are such counteractions to the natural instinct which invests with awe and terror the contemplation of severance between soul and body?"

Taë looked surprised, but there was great tenderness in his voice as he replied, "I will tell my father what you say. I will entreat him to spare your life."

"He has, then, already decreed to destroy it?"

"'Tis my sister's fault or folly," said Taë, with some petulance. "But she spoke this morning to my father; and, after she had spoken, he summoned me, as a chief among the children who are commissioned to destroy such lives as threaten the community, and he said to me, 'Take thy vril staff, and seek the stranger who has made himself dear to thee. Be his end painless and prompt.'"

"And," I faltered, recoiling from the child—"and it is, then, for my murder that thus treacherously thou hast invited me forth? No,

I cannot believe it. I cannot think thee guilty of such a crime."

"It is no crime to slay those who threaten the good of the community; it would be a crime to slay the smallest insect that cannot harm us."

"If you mean that I threaten the good of the community because your sister honors me with the sort of preference which a child may feel for a strange plaything, it is not necessary to kill me. Let me return to the people I have left, and by the chasm through which I descended. With a slight help from you, I might do so now. You, by the aid of your wings, could fasten to the rocky ledge within the chasm the cord that you found, and have no doubt preserved. Do but that; assist me but to the spot from which I alighted, and I vanish from your world for ever, and as surely as if I were among the dead."

"The chasm through which you descended! Look round; we stand now on the very place where it yawned. What see you? Only solid rock. The chasm was closed, by the orders of Aph-Lin, as soon as communication between him and yourself was established in your trance, and he learned from your own lips the nature of the world from which you came. Do you not remember when Zee bade me not question you as to yourself or your race? On quitting you that day, Aph-Lin accosted me, and said, 'No path between the stranger's home and ours should be left unclosed, or the sorrow and evil of his home may descend to ours. Take with thee the children of thy band, smite the sides of the cavern with your vril staves till the fall of their fragments fills up every chink through which a gleam of our lamps could force its way."

As the child spoke, I stared aghast at the blind rocks before me. Huge and irregular, the granite masses, showing by charred discoloration where they had been shaddered, rose from footing to roof-top; not a cranny!

"All hope, then, is gone," I murmured, sinking down on the craggy wayside, "and I shall nevermore see the sun." I covered my face with my hands, and prayed to Him whose presence I had so often forgotten when the heavens had declared His handiwork. I felt His presence in the depths of the nether earth, and amid the world of the grave. I looked up, taking comfort and courage from my prayers, and gazing with a quiet smile into the face of the child, said, "Now, if thou must slay me, strike."

Tae shook his head gently. "Nay," he said, "my father's request is not so formally made as to leave me no choice. I will speak with him, and I may prevail to save thee. Strange that thou shouldst have that fear of death which we thought was only the instinct of the inferior creatures, to whom the conviction of another life has not been vouchsafed. With us, not an infant knows such a fear. Tell me, my dear Tish," he continued, after a little pause, "would it reconcile thee more to departure from this form of life to that form which lies on the other side of the moment called 'death,' did I share thy journey? If so, I will ask my father whether it be allowable for me to go with thee. I am one of our generation destined to emigrate, when of age for it, to some regions unknown within this world. I would just as soon emigrate now to regions unknown, in another world. The All-Good is no less there than here. Where is He not?"

"Child," said I, seeing by Taë's countenance that he spoke in serious earnest, "it is crime in thee to slay me; it were a crime not less in me to say, 'Slay thyself.' The All-Good chooses His own time to give us life, and His own time to take it away. Let us go back. If, on speaking with thy father, he decides on my death, give me the longest warning in thy power, so that I may pass the interval in self-preparation."

We walked back to the city, conversing but by fits and starts. We could not understand each other's reasonings, and I felt for the fair child, with his soft voice and beautiful face, much as a convict feels for the executioner who walks beside him to the place of doom.

CHAPTER XXIX.

In the midst of those hours set apart for sleep and constituting the night of the Vril-ya, I was awakened from the disturbed slumber into which I had not long fallen, by a hand on my shoulder. I started, and beheld Zee standing beside me.

"Hush," she said in a whisper; "let no one

hear us. Dost thou think that I have ceased to watch over thy safety because I could not win thy love? I have seen Taë. He has not prevailed with his father, who had meanwhile conferred with the three sages whom, in doubtful matters, he takes into council, and by their advice he has ordained thee to perish when the world reawakens to life. I will save thee. Rise and dress."

Zee pointed to a table by the couch on which I saw the clothes I had worn on quitting the upper world, and which I had exchanged subsequently for the more picturesque garments of the Vril-ya. The young Gy then moved towards the casement and stepped into the balcony, while hastily and wonderingly I donned my own habiliments. When I joined her on the balcony, her face was pale and rigid. Taking me by the hand, she said softly, "See how brightly the art of the Vril-ya has lighted up the world in which they dwell. To-morrow that world will be dark to me." She drew me back into the room without waiting for my answer, thence into the corridor, from which we descended into the hall. We passed into the deserted streets and along the broad upward road which wound beneath the rocks. Here, where there is neither day nor night, the Silent Hours are untterably solemn,—the vast space illumined by mortal skill is so wholly without the sight and stir of mortal life. Soft as were our footsteps, their sounds vexed the ear, as out of harmony with the universal repose. I was aware in my own mind, though Zee said it not, that shè had decided to assist my return to the upper world, and that we were bound towards the place from which I had descended. Her silence infected me, and commanded mine. And now we approached the chasm. It had been reopened; not presenting, indeed, the same aspect as when I had emerged from it, but through that closed wall of rock before which I had last stood with Taë, a new cleft had been riven, and along its blackened sides still glimmered sparks and smouldered embers. My upward gaze could not, however, penetrate more than a few feet into the darkness of the hollow void, and I stood dismayed, and wondering how that grim ascent was to be made.

Zee divined my doubt. "Fear not," said she, with a faint smile; "your return is assured. I began this work when the Silent Hours commenced, and all else were asleep: believe that I did not pause till the path back into thy world was clear. I shall be with thee a little while yet. We do not part until thou sayest, 'Go, for I need thee no more.'"

My hear smote me with remorse at these words. "Ah!" I exclaimed, "would that thou wert of my race or I of thine, then I should never say, 'I need thee no more.'"

"I bless thee for those words, and I shall remember them when thou art gone," answered the Gy, tenderly.

During this brief interchange of words, Zee had turned away from me, her form bent and her head bowed over her breast. Now, she rose to the full height of her grand stature, and stood fronting me. While she had been thus averted from my gaze, she had lighted up the circlet that she wore round her brow, so that it blazed as if it were a crown of stars. Not only her face and her form, but the atmosphere around, were illumined by the effulgence of the diadem.

"Now," said she, "put thine arms around me for the first and last time. Nay, thus; courage, and cling firm."

As she spoke her form dilated, the vast wings expanded. Clinging to her, I was borne aloft through the terrible chasm. The starry light from her forehead shot around and before us through the darkness. Brightly, and steadfastly, and swiftly as an angel may soar heavenward with the soul it rescues from the grave, went the flight of the Gy, till I heard in the distance the hum of human voices, the sounds of human toil. We halted on the flooring of one of the galleries of the mine, and beyond, in the vista, burned the dim, rare, feeble lamps of the miners. Then I released my hold. The Gy kissed me on my forehead passionately, but as with a mother's passion, and said, as the tears gushed from her eyes, "Farewell forever. Thou wilt not let me go into thy world—thou canst never return to mine. Ere our household shake off slumber, the rocks will have again closed over the chasm, not to be re-opened by me, nor perhaps by others, for ages yet unguessed. Think of me sometimes, and with kindness. When I reach the life that lies beyond this speck in time, I shall look around for thee. Even there, the world consigned to thyself and thy people may have rocks and gulfs which divide it from that in which I rejoin those of my race that have gone

before, and I may be powerless to cleave way to regain thee as I have cloven way to lose."

Her voice ceased. I heard the swan-like sough of her wings, and saw the rays of her stary diadem receding far and farther through the gloom.

I sate myself down for some time, musing sorrowfully; then I rose and took my way with slow footsteps towards the place in which I heard the sounds of men. The miners I encountered were strange to me, of another nation than my own. They turned to look at me with some surprise, but finding that I could not answer their brief questions in their own language, they returned to their work and suffered me pass on unmolested. In fine, I regained the mouth of the mine, little troubled by other interrogatories;—save those of a friendly official to whom I was known, and luckily he was too busy to talk much with me. I took care not to return to my former lodging, but hastened that very day to quit a neighborhood where I could not long have escaped inquires to which I could have given no satisfactory answers. I regained in safety my own country, in which I have been long peacefully settled, and engaged in practical business, till I retired, on a competent fortune, three years ago. I have been little invited and little tempted to talk of the rovings and adventures of my youth. Somewhat disappointed, as most men are, in matters connected with household love and domestic life, I often think of the young Gy as I sit alone at night, and wonder how I could have rejected such a love, no matter what dangers attended it, or by what conditions it was restricted. Only, the more I think of a people calmly developing, in regions excluded from our sight and deemed uninhabitable by our sages, powers surpassing our most disciplined modes of force, and virtues to which our life, social and political, becomes antagonistic in proportion as our civilization advances,—the more devoutly I pray that ages may yet elapse before there emerge into sunlight our inevitable destroyers. Being, however, frankly told by my physician that I am afflicted by a complaint which, though it gives little pain and no perceptible notice of its encroachments, may at any moment be fatal, I have thought it my duty to my fellow-men to place on record these forewarnings of The Coming Race.

END OF "THE COMING RACE."